# *Here is England*

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Frances L. Earhart

July 16th, 1930 -

from Mrs. Tomlee -

*Here Is England*

# HERE IS ENGLAND

*by*

MARION BALDERSTON

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HERE IS ENGLAND

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TO MY MOTHER

# *FOREWORD*

A LITTLE WORD OF INTRODUCTION WHICH YOU SHOULD READ

You should go to England, at least (whatever your attitude towards other foreign countries), as a grown-up goes back to his childhood home. Perhaps when you land there first, you will feel something familiar in all its strangeness, many of us do; for good American mixture that we are, it is the home of our family's childhood, if not our own. Never, never go as a tourist, as a visitor observing the odd and curious mannerisms of an alien race, comparing, commenting, making notes, "broadening the mind by travel"—as though the mind were an elastic to be stretched and snapped back at will, "finishing the children's education"—as though the children's or anybody's education could ever be finished, could ever be anything but well or badly begun.

You should not go to England; you should feel you return to it.

But it should not be a home fallen into other hands, peopled with indifferent strangers, for the going back would be too desolate. No, some member of your family should be there to say Welcome, to be personally interested in your particular welfare; to tell you how to pronounce scone and schedule (for there is an English and an American language and books have been written about their differences); to supply facts when these dull things are needed; to piece together the bits of history you will meet in one place and an-

other; to be useful about motor roads and the running time between towns; to know something of the romantic side of cathedral building; even to know the little lost corners where no tourists, not even the touring English, go; to be in short, a useful but not obtrusive guide, an intellectual handyman. For if you see England properly and as few travellers unfortunately do, you will love it as you love no other place in the world outside your own garden plot.

But what shall this welcoming member of the family be? Not a mother nor a father, that relation is too intimate, and a cousin is as good as no relation at all. No, it should be an uncle—or an aunt. An aunt! We all have pleasant recollections of an aunt. Picture her as you will, since she is a made-to-order article, an Ideal Relation, an archetype of all nice aunts—but make her cheerful, efficient, and a little gossipy.

Very well, then, this is the aunt.

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*Here Is England*

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## Chapter One

### YOU FOLLOW CHAUCER TO CANTERBURY

Now the aunt will tell you—she will probably write it to your boat at Liverpool or Southampton, or London Docks—that a wonderful way to see England is to buy one of the cheap little English motor cars as soon as you land, selling it back to the company at an agreed price at the end of your visit. These comfortable little cars go thirty to thirty-five miles on a gallon—you must learn at once to say petrol instead of gasoline—they cost almost nothing to run; you can use up all the mileage you want and the company asks nothing but that the car be returned in "reasonably good condition," and they are most lenient as to what they call reasonable. The cost of a car for a whole summer's, or even a month's, touring is very small. Or, if you are there for quite a brief time, you can hire a car and drive it yourself, for any period from an afternoon to several weeks, and you are always protected by an insurance scheme which seems to the American trained mind, most astoundingly generous.

Of course you can go by train, and motor busses or charabancs (cherrybangs the populace calls them) cover most of England. But the roads are good, and still so free it is a pleasure to drive over them, and with a motor, England is a mere pocket-handkerchief on the map of the world. With a small low-powered car, you can leave the heart of the largest city in the world in mid-morning, have lunch in either of the two old university towns, tea in the seventeenth century in the blue and brown stone Cotswolds, dinner in the twelfth or eleventh centuries in the shadow of a Norman cathedral, or go behind history to historic legend, to the Isle of Avalon itself, where Arthur died and where, they say, the Grail is still buried. One hour from London in any direction and you can be in villages where the newest house stood when we were thirteen belligerent little colonies; the oldest might have seen the Wars of the Roses. Or you can picnic in the sun by a pond of black peat water among hills covered with dark green pine and purple heather with not even a shepherd's cottage in sight.

But all this is passing; mass production motor cars are carrying more and more thousands of Londoners into the country, and romance flees before the real-estate developer. What with one thing and another—they call it Progress—the England we can dream about is changing fast. It is for us to be grateful, however, for all that is left, and to be on our way to see it.

The first question is, Where? As all roads, or at least, all railroads lead to London, let us suppose we are there. But let us start from London, not with it; London has many things which you, as a newcomer, cannot as yet appreciate: it hides too much beneath its modern skin, it needs a certain amount of sympathy and a great deal of understanding of ways that are peculiarly English. But once you have that, you will love it with a personal, devoted love, such as you think you can only give a man or a woman, and you will go back to it again and again. As we shall do, presently.

Where shall we go? It does not much matter, since all ways will be delightful. North there is Cambridge, Ely and Peterborough and Lincoln; York with its perfect, complete battlemented city walls; north runs the Watling Street of the Romans, which, to-day or to-morrow or later, shall take us through the smoky, noisy, depressingly modern Midlands. West is Wales, and south the Garden of England. Chaucer rode south, or at least southeast, over London Bridge into Southark (pronounced briefly Sutherk) and on with the other Pilgrims to Canterbury. That is no reason why we should do the same, but for us, with the sun shining and all England before us, it is as good a reason as any, and more romantic than most. So let us go to Canterbury, which is only a few hours' run in our shiny new motor car, following the road that Chaucer took from the Tabard Inn—

which has long since passed away—with the Knight and the Innkeeper and the gentle Nun, the Miller, the Wife of Bath, and all the rest of his jolly company.

The happiest thing that any one can wish for you, is that when you first go to Canterbury, you know nothing at all of cathedrals, and nothing of architecture beyond that it concerns the putting together of walls and a roof. For Canterbury has much to teach you; oh, much more than the difference between the four great periods of English Gothic. The technique you will pick up as you go, along with the poetic phraseology of the architect; it is easy to distinguish between the sturdy Norman and the divinely aspiring Early English, the elaborate, decadent Decorated, and the formal, less imaginative Perpendicular. Canterbury will show you them all, most happily combined, and it will show you something else, the glory of mass, the warmth of cold stone, the mellowness that Time alone can give anything, the intangible beauty of Faith solidified into the tangible beauty of a building.

And what it gives you will stay with you, not only to the next cathedral and the next, your pleasure growing with your appreciation, but home, even to the vast and romantic bulk of skyscrapers that turn Manhattan into an enchanted floating city drifting down its two rivers towards you, perfectly and beautifully expressing our modern kind of faith. And beyond that, for it

will teach you the difference between what is really good and what is tawdry, what is real and what is cheap, what is perfect and what is mere mechanical perfection.

All this, you will ask sceptically, a whole education in æsthetics, architecture, religion and history? Yes, and in emotions too, for it will teach you both awe and reverence, which are good for the soul. So of course might any of the great cathedrals, Wells or Lincoln or Salisbury or—but we are here at Canterbury, and if, after your travels, you still think this is the most beautiful of all, you will find many thousands who agree with you. All I can wish for you is that you walk through the flaked and crumbling gateway which is near the High Street and is the one entrance to the Close, that you look beyond the quaint row of houses to your left, to the vast pile of the Cathedral beyond, that, ignorant, the whole force of it bursts upon you. It is like being blind and having your eyes opened to the light, like living in darkness and first seeing the glory of the dawn. It will overpower you, this gigantic loveliness, and if it does not you had better go back to America at once, for England has nothing to give you. Or you can go and study in books until you know all the points and interesting bits to look for, and then take what cold and pedantic pleasure you may in finding them. But even then, I think there will be something.

This much you may know first. So long ago as

the year 596 Pope Gregory in Rome sent Augustine to Britain. He wasn't a saint until later, and must not be confused with the greater Saint Augustine who wrote the "City of God" and was one of the four great fathers of the Church and had died more than a hundred and fifty years before. Our Saint Augustine was either timid or extra cautious, for he turned back to Rome to receive more encouragement from the Pope and not until 597 did he land on the Isle of Thanet and proceed the short distance to Canterbury. That city, then called Cantwaerbyrig, which you may spell half a dozen different ways and be right, means the borough (byrig) or city of the Men of Kent, and all over the nearby country your motor will take you past inns whose signs name them "The Man of Kent." For still Kent is a separate sort of place, for all it's a county and not a kingdom, whose people think differently and talk with a different sort of accent and even dress their whiskers differently. This you will recognise when you have travelled the other counties.

Augustine had little difficulty, really, when one thinks of what most missionaries go through. Ethelbert, the king, was anxious to be converted and his Queen Bertha was already a Christian, and gave Augustine a ready-made church—one built by the Romans, since much changed but still with Roman work and Roman tile in its walls. It is called St. Martin's, and you may drive to it later, as it is only a little way towards the eastern edge

of the town. Legend says its pre-Norman font was the one in which Ethelbert was first baptised, but that's as may be.

In any case, Augustine began his cathedral after the Roman manner of architecture, but it was rebuilt some three hundred and fifty years later, to be destroyed in 1067, a year after the coming of the Conqueror. Then a very great cathedral was planned, much of which remains. And over the centuries it continued to be rebuilt and added to, according as the fashions in architecture changed or the place caught fire again, until in 1495, which is much nearer to our time than to St. Augustine's, they began the great central tower which is two hundred and thirty-five feet high and called Bell Harry, and which you may see with all the beauty of its straight Perpendicular lines, long before you reach the city itself.

As you walk in from the Gate you walk towards the porch that leads you into the nave. But before you enter, walk around the cathedral and look up at it, not bothering about nave or transepts or apse, but merely looking up at its form and golden brown colour, its grandeur, its wonderful detail work. Archbishops to whom religion was art and art religion, planned and built and rebuilt and preserved it—for you, on your homecoming. And if you feel yourself getting physically smaller as your eyes follow buttress to wall and wall to roof and roof to tower and the great tower to its

top, it is only because your soul is growing, and that is a good thing for you.

Remember, however, that a cathedral is invariably a cross, its foot, let us call it, being at the west, its head, or apse (to which often a Lady Chapel is added), to the east. Its two arms are called its north and south transepts, which is the best way of distinguishing them, and when, as with Canterbury, there are two sets of transepts, they are northeast and northwest, southeast and southwest. The long leg of the cross is the nave, which goes as far as the transepts, and beyond is the choir extending to the apse or else the square east end. And the only other points to remember are, that transepts are apt to have side aisles, and cathedral naves always have them, separated by the rows of great columns or pillars where so much sculpture is used. And the aisle where you walk around the choir is called the ambulatory (our word amble comes from it, or its root). And that will do for a first lesson; it is merely to give us a few points to work from, or to walk to, where some special things are to be seen.

For instance, if you want to know Norman decoration so you can never forget it again, find the southeast transept, which is only a little way to your right as you stand by the entrance porch of the cathedral. In its corner is a square tower known as Anselm's Tower, which has a lot of curious carving on it. That, which is crude, perhaps, and easy to do, but very effective, is early Norman,

and when you've become a real enthusiast, you will hunt diligently over cathedrals and village churches for walls and windows that will show you a bit like this, proving that somewhere around or before 1150, the chisel fashioned the stone that your twentieth-century hand can touch. And if you want to see the real and the imitation in contrast, walk around to the western front of the cathedral and study it. Here are two flanking towers where the nave ends in the façade, the southern one is the original one, about the same date as the big central tower, the north one an imitation of it done less than a century ago to replace a very old one which was falling down. Even the new tower has mellowed, but it is worth your while to notice how the hands of a generation which had less of faith, had lost their magic.

And now you may enter. And if fate is good to you and it is the first time you have stepped within a cathedral door, may some one be playing the organ far up there beyond the long nave in the choir, so that music will be added to form and colour and mass. The music of a cathedral is different from concert music or even church music, for it goes high up into those pointed vaultings and descends from heaven itself, and the last magic of all is upon you.

Now you may look about. You will find, after a few weeks, that every cathedral will have its colour note for you—Salisbury is grey, and Lichfield brown, and Westminster Abbey the green that

lives deep in the sea. When you get as far as the Sainte Chapelle in Paris you will step into the heart of a flaming ruby, and only when you stand under the western windows of Chartres will you know why blue is celestial. Canterbury is radiant gold. Yet the thing which, as a pilgrim, has carried you down the Canterbury road, is not colour, but the site of the tomb of Thomas A'Becket.

But that is far to the east of the cathedral in the wide space behind the choir and the High Altar, and you are barely inside the door, at the west, with much to see and learn first. Toleration of crowds, for one thing! It is nice to play at being pilgrims, but the age of the miracles of faith is past (at least it is supposed to be in England, but that is a matter for you to decide later), and those who surround the place of the tomb of the now sainted Becket are no longer devout suppliants on their knees, but visitors in motor cars, or holiday trippers from charabancs. They will get in your way and make irreverent remarks, or at the least bury their noses in guidebooks and read out dates to all within hearing, and after a casual glance at the object they've been reading about, go on to the next "point of interest." If you are unwise enough to visit a big cathedral on a Saturday afternoon or a Bank Holiday, you will most likely have to join a whole party of them and go on a personally conducted tour. Whereas cathedrals, like green pastures and old books, were meant to browse in. But learn tolerance! After all, the blood of the cathe-

dral builders still runs through the veins of the "trippers" and the most irreverent of them takes an enormous pride in every historic object. It is one of the things that a country with a past can give to its people.

Well, look up, if the crowd is big enough to annoy you, or if, like me, you prefer to have cathedrals to yourself. In this case you can follow the arches up eighty feet until they join in the roof. The nave, if you want the next lesson in architecture, is entirely Perpendicular, which means, in so old a building, that several naves stood where this one does. In this case, the new, that is, the present nave, was begun at the very beginning of the Perpendicular style, so you have a chance to study this at its freshest and best. Actually, it was started about 1376, a hundred and some odd years before the great central tower, when people were tiring of the flowing lines of the Decorated, and wanted something simpler and stronger. The straight up and down of the new style satisfied them, also it emphasised the height they loved so. If you want the Decorated, you will not find much of it in Canterbury. When you climb the steps and enter the choir, which is exceptionally long for a choir, being two feet more than the nave itself, you will skip a whole architectural "period" and indeed, go well back into the period before that, for the combination of round and pointed arches which you will find there is an excellent example of the transition from

rounded Norman to pointed Early English. Indeed, all over this part of the building you will find traces of the work done when the influence of the Conquering Norman was strong: a round arch is Norman architecture, it must have been built well before 1200, there are no exceptions to this.

Perhaps, before completing the pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas, which is only a few steps away now, it might be well to learn a few actual dates.

Rickman, who is one of the greatest authorities on English Gothic, gives this table for the four different "periods."

From 1066 to 1189—Norman
From 1189 to 1307—Early English
From 1307 to 1377—Decorated
From 1377 to 1546—Perpendicular

After that the English world was done with Gothic, though in very rural places it continued for a time. Indeed, even before that architects were turning back to Rome for inspiration, and the classic, or the Renaissance or the Romanesque, as you choose to call it, became the fashion. "Crude as Gothic" is a phrase you'll meet often in eighteenth-century plays; it must have been current in classically designed drawing rooms. How unhappily Christopher Wren, greatest of English Romanesque architects, dealt in Gothic, you can see by the two western towers he put on Westminster

Abbey when it was thought he should complete that never finished building. How aware he was that Gothic was not his style you will see later at Lincoln, where he rebuilt a part of the cloisters after his own manner, which is superb, but not Gothic. And from this Romanesque comes every "Colonial" suburban house we now have and the style of all our historic American buildings.

However, remember these dated divisions or not, as you choose. You must hold only to the one date every English-speaking person knows, that in 1066 William the Norman conquered England and generally set it topsyturvy. The solid, round arched style his masons brought with them, with its geometric, zigzag, or hatchet work, rather like the work our own Indians use for decoration, lasted a full century and a quarter. It replaced a curious pointed sort of Saxon work, about which you may learn more later, though no one knows much, and which you may actually see for yourself in a wooden church more than 900 years old, a little beyond the suburbs of London. The Norman work was durable, its walls were thick and its arches could carry any number of tons of masonry piled above them. And the proof of its goodness is, that when cathedrals were rebuilt, usually the Norman crypts were left. (Crypt is one of the romantic, architectural terms—it means a cellar.)

However, the Norman style did not give the builders the height they craved and the light that only great windows could let in. For these archi-

tects and masons, who planned in terms of heavy stone, planned and thought also in delicate terms of balanced and mellowing shadow. Light is knowledge, but shadow is mystery, and the Christian faith gave both. And if you look down the long nave at Canterbury, which is late, as cathedral naves go, you will see that they wanted light almost everywhere. And you will learn too, as you travel through England, that as the centuries passed after the Conquering Norman, knowledge was used more and more instead of shadow and mystery to bolster up faith, and that cathedrals, which express faith, widened their windows and buttressed their narrowing walls to let in the light of day. Until in the end came that gorgeous iconoclast, Henry the Eighth, and for a long time neither men nor cathedrals knew what their faith dared be.

This, however, is far ahead of the present lesson. Canterbury uses the pointed arch, which was nothing new when the nave was built, and about which we will know more later. Light pours into the place from the side aisle windows and from above the nave itself, where the windows of the clerestory (or clearstory, as you wish, but pronounced as this latter way spells it) are fine and large.

The choir, however, to which we have at last progressed up some steps, is shadowier and earlier, being mostly late twelfth century and the work of two Williams, the first, of Sens, who fell from a scaffold and was killed here, and his successor,

called "The Englishman" to distinguish him. You must look here for the combination of round Norman and pointed Early English arches, as you are now in this "period," and the use of dark shafts against light stone, which is one of the great things Early English architects did. And then we have at last, passing behind the choir, reached the end of our present pilgrimage, at least we have reached the site of the shrine of St. Thomas.

They say it was a magnificent shrine, with a tall lower part with niches where the sick might place themselves close to the body, and above, a wooden second story holding the casket or chest, overlaid with gold sheets and inset with marvellous jewels. All this Henry the Eighth took to himself, but what his plundering soldiers did with the shrine and the body nobody knows.

Thomas A'Becket was first buried in the crypt, and not moved up here until four years after his murder, during which time the church had been burnt and rebuilding started. But whether in the crypt, or here behind the High Altar, miracles happened, beginning in 1170, a century and four years after the Conqueror, when he was buried, and when a most repentant King, Henry II, came on his knees and lamented that a hasty phrase of his had been the cause of his archbishop's death.

For three entire centuries pilgrims and worshippers came, kings and common people and beggars, down the Roman Road from London, up the Roman Road from Dover, and from everywhere

else, and on their knees they crept up the steps that lead from nave to choir and to his chapel. And of course, he was sainted, and the stories of the miracles performed at his tomb spread over the world. And gradually, as these things always go, the devout journey became a pleasure jaunt. The town thrived in its pilgrim trade—as it still does; you may look at houses Chaucer looked at wherever you go—and sold whatever must have been the mediæval equivalent of picture post cards and souvenirs. And at the end, miracle stories passed into legend, and we have two things—another saint in the Roman Calendar and a verb, "to canter," which expressed the easy, pleasant jog trot of these latter-day pilgrims.

Now, who was Thomas A'Becket, that the blind should see and the lame walk, for a prayer at his tomb? Many a man before him had been murdered, so it clearly wasn't *that*. He came of a family which was nothing much, not even romantically poor. In those days the common man's career, if he had intelligence and ambition, was in the Church. Thomas had plenty of both, and personal charm as well, and became the bosom friend of the king, Henry, who was thirteen or more years younger. For years he played the king's game, rather than the church's: he made and he stopped wars, he dressed more gorgeously than his royal master, he lived in magnificent state. Now to have the church really subordinate to the throne, thought Henry, I shall make Becket archbishop of

Canterbury and head of the church in England when the present archbishop dies. Then indeed, with *his* power under *my* power—but he reckoned wrongly. Either a real sense of religion, which he had certainly been suppressing if he had it, or a sense that now his power was great or greater than the king's, or else a grand and glorious sense of the dramatic—something made Becket discard his wonderful clothes, his palaces and horses and banquets and luxuries, and lead, from then on, a rigid and ascetic life. As for Henry, he was quarrelling with him in no time over the opposing rights of church and state, and in eight years Becket lay in a pool of blood in the northwestern transept of Canterbury, where you may see the spot, and four overzealous courtiers were wiping their daggers and hastening from the gloom of the twilit cathedral to their horses on the Canterbury Road. To cap the dramatic stories that always surrounded him, it was found that he wore, and they said had always worn, a hair shirt under his silken robes.

There is nothing in all this to make miracles possible; nothing as we see things to-day. Perhaps he captured the imagination of the people, perhaps the sight of a king on his knees doing penance was overawing. But more likely it was the eagerness of the age to believe in things miraculous. There is a story in the Golden Legend which may amuse you—Thomas of Canterbury ordered a monk dismissed because of his stupidity. The poor fellow had been in the habit of celebrating

mass daily for the Virgin, and the Virgin herself stepped in to help him, poor, stupid, devout fellow that he was. It seems that a time came when Thomas had to repair that hair shirt of his, which he hid under his bed until he should have time to get around to it. (One wonders frivolously what he did about laundering it.) The Virgin said she herself would mend it and to go to Thomas and tell him what she was doing, and that he should keep on this devout monk whom she favoured. And behold, when Thomas drew out the shirt from beneath his bed, the hole was darned! And the monk stayed and was sworn to secrecy about the shirt's existence; and certainly, no one ever did know of it until that night when the archbishop was struck down.

This was one of many tales that began to go about. If you want to know the speed with which stories of even the most fantastic kind can multiply themselves and spread, remember the War, and the rumours of victories and losses and atrocities that flew about then. Think of these things in an age when all general news was by word of mouth, and people were simple and credulous!

But it was more than that. The Church, quite properly no doubt, taught her people to believe in miracles. And they wanted to believe in them. As thousands want to to-day, and do, and go to Lourdes for proof, where the lame walk away leaving their crutches behind. You may analyse all this as you will, preferably waiting until you

have seen more cathedrals and know more of their miracles and much more of the age they all happened in. It was, at all events, an age of few thrills, but great ones when they occurred. And St. Thomas provided excitement for centuries.

Edward the Black Prince lies in Canterbury also; his tomb was built two hundred years after Becket's. His name is one of romance and his exploits in France and his marriage to Joan the Fair Maid of Kent have been the basis of much sentimental fiction. The portrait figure of him above the tomb is one of the finest anywhere, he was lean and handsome and distinguished, one would think he'd have deserved a better son than Richard the Second. Above him his actual gauntlets and helmet hang, covered literally with the dust of centuries—does that thrill you, that these beloved objects should have stayed so near him for so long, through the many misfortunes that have befallen Canterbury and its tombs? If you want to place him in English history, in connection with other events, remember that the Wars of the Roses grew eventually out of the contest between the progeny of the many sons of King Edward the Third. It is in your guidebook perhaps, in history books, in Holinshed's delightful Chronicles—in Shakespeare. "Edward the Third, my lords, had seven sons," says Shakespeare, and turns a paragraph of Holinshed's prose into perfect blank verse by the twist of a phrase or so. The first of the seven, of course, was this prince, whose image

is before us, whose helmet hangs over our head, whose robes and bones lie just the other side of a slab of stone. That, somehow, is the realising of both history and literature.

And there is more to come, when we turn from Canterbury and take to the Road again.

# Chapter Two

## VILLAGES AND ANCIENT BRASS

Now when an orchestra leader is clever, he puts in some "little suites" or ballets, something soothing or at least easier to digest, between his big symphony and his grand climax, realising of course that no one could stand, say, the Death and Transfiguration and the Poeme de l'Exstace and the Love and Death music all in one evening, any more than one could stand a prolonged and rich and very sweet meal. We can go only just so far emotionally. After that, things flatten out and it is no fault of ours. But the result is indifference.

So it is with cathedrals. We turn our backs on Canterbury, only to face westward towards Winchester, Salisbury, Glastonbury, Wells. With our new motor purring, we can eat up the miles between and see them quickly, for England is a tiny place and its beauty concentrated. But—you will like them better if you will be wisely guided and see first some of the little thatched villages, stop at the pretty inns, pretty in spite of the nineteenth-century horrors of wall paper and furniture that clutter them up; go into the village churches, which are always open for you and always a delight, and

generally, as the guidebooks phrase it, learn something of English country life.

You've had your symphony, you shall have it again and again; these places are the little songs put in between. And I would choose this part of Kent to ramble about in; for one reason, there is no lovelier country. For another—but that one is enough. There's more romantic glamour in the South Downs, there's bleak beauty in the mountains of Wales, there's "scenery" in the best lithographic manner in the Lake country, and a ghostly compelling fascination in the Plains around Salisbury. But nowhere is there a more intimate charm than in some of the villages of Kent, away from the high roads and lost to the world. There is something about this country that is yielding and sweet, you can love it and put your arms around it, and you can live with it happily forever and for always.

Maidstone is a good centre, you can reach the towns near the Thames, or run south quickly into the Romney Marsh. You are already on the edge of the Weald and the villages in the Valley of the Medway are an easy ride or a walk. And you are near the Pilgrim's Way, which, incidentally, has nothing to do with Chaucer, but much with those strange groping figures who came over from an uncivilised Continent and are lumped under the scientific names of Neolithic or Paleolithic Man.

Besides, Maidstone has good inns, competent garages, cheap as well as expensive antique shops,

"half-timbered" houses jumbled together with modern machine-brick fronts, which is typical of all prosperous county towns, and, as well, one of the most delightful views of the bishop's palace and the church reflected in the Medway.

As a bit of practical advice, buy yourself a set of motoring maps before you start. There are all sorts to choose from; they're well done, giving even fourth-rate roads. And buy enough of one particular make to cover your entire journey, otherwise your maps may overlap, and the differing scales they are drawn to may make you misjudge time and distances. And just here, buy either a one-inch or a two-inch ordnance survey map of the district around Maidstone and Sevenoaks—where we are bound. These are made with an accuracy of detail that leaves one amazed, for every field and path and stone is on them, every right of way and every house—and the names are there, the names that every field and farm possesses, that were there when the English language was forming and have survived to this most modern sheet of paper! If you don't think an ordnance map is a whole romantic novel, just you sit down and read it!

And, by the way, ask at the stationer's for the Roman Map of Great Britain, published by His Majesty's Ordnance Survey Department of Southampton, price, I think, four shillings. Here are all the Roman Roads that we have so far found out. Each new edition shows more. Watling

Street is there, and Stane Street and the Fosse Way and many others, and where the present road runs, the line is firm, and where the way has been lost, or has become a track across the hills (there is almost always some trace if you look hard), the line is dotted. You can spend a long and happy season if you lay your motor map over this Roman one, and in your car follow Cæsar's legions throughout Britain. Let us be grateful to a Survey Department for having so much imagination!

There are many ways to Maidstone from Canterbury, but one, that goes round about, takes you through three places little known except to antiquaries and the local folk. The first is Ospringe, on the main road back to Rochester, where you must stop a moment at a most ancient of ancient houses, an old hospital that is still called the Maison Dieu, which seems to take its history back to the Norman-French days of Britain. Recently it has become a Roman museum.

For not long ago a nearby field was being dug up, and earthenware pots of odd design were found, and then bones, and presently, the whole village turning in to dig and sift the soil ever so carefully, with experts down from London to supervise, a Roman cemetery was found and laid bare. Seven hundred years ago the house was built where you can see the burial urns, and eight hundred or more years before that the Romans, and the conquered tribes who lived so peaceably with them, were laid here to rest.

And the most interesting part is that every one of the handful of people who make up the population of Ospringe has become an antiquary. I can only hope you have some such guide as I had, for he was the local shoemaker, and he talked most learnedly and simply on urns and Roman coins and burial customs.

Next the Maison Dieu runs a lane with houses close on either side. Occasionally, for no reason any one has found, a spring appears and the lane becomes a flood, and stays so from a week to a summer. Usually the flood comes in a dry season, which makes it all the more odd. But do the people move because any fine morning their doors are apt to open on a river instead of a path? They do not—and that's a part of England, too. What does it mean? I cannot tell you; it's simply one of the things you must smile at and go on thinking quaint and not understanding, until out of the sum of many such small unimportant bits you'll really learn your England.

Cobham comes next. After you've passed through Rochester—where, by the way, is plenty of Norman architecture to look at in its small cathedral—you climb the hill that gives you such a delightful view down the Medway during the day, and of the city's twinkling lights and river water on a moonlit night, and then you watch for the sign posts pointing south. Cobham is not far from London, only a few miles from the string of towns around Rochester, a mere mile from the

great highway itself, yet with its quiet street, its church with low tower and gate, its Leather Bottle Inn, it is quite as good a mediæval picture to-day as it was hundreds of years ago.

Its tale is a short one, but you will like Cobham as well whether you know it or not. It was off the great Road, which led all the way from Rome to this corner of her far-flung Empire, so the life of the Road never touched it, which is lucky for it, and for us if we go there. For Cromwell's destructive zealots also passed it by, and so, by what seems a miracle, its ancient brasses are intact. Whatever guidebooks mention it do so only to speak of the brasses, which are among the most perfect and famous in any village church.

Monumental church brasses are a new language to us, one of several we shall find pleasant learning as we go along. The real church brass enthusiast will travel miles and miles to see even the smallest fragment of a carved plate, and having taken a "rubbing," will go elsewhere to study it at his leisure. The technique is the one we all employed in primary school days, when we laid a sheet of paper on a penny and went back and forth over it with a pencil, until we had achieved a beautifully embossed Indian's head. But for brasses you use black crayon and thin, soft paper, so the incised figures and words come out light and the rest dark.

A sign by the church door tells you where to find the guide, for this is one of the few that are

locked, having within it so much that is precious. I hope it will be the same old, indeed quite mediæval, lady who came appropriately out of a mediæval cottage, leaning upon a stick, with a sheet of paper telling about the church. She was so much a part of all the oldness I would not want to go back if I heard she was no longer there. But if she is, she will pull back the rugs that now protect these monuments from hard-shod modern feet, and let you go down on your knees to make what you will of the odd lettering and the crude curious figures. Indeed, the only way to study a brass properly if you haven't a rubbing, is in this squashy, uncomfy, and not at all religious position.

What you can't make out, she knows. She knows many delightful things about these members of the Cobham and Brooks families who now lie under your feet, immortalised in metal, but she begins every sentence with a sort of simple diffidence, "My paper tells me"—then tells you much that is not on her typewritten sheet. She will show you the tilting armour in the chancel. Did one of these wasp-waisted gentlemen, so neatly carved in brass, go tilting in the fields we shall shortly motor past? And did these still more wasp-waisted ladies, with towering headdresses and incredibly long full skirts, stand by and watch, their hands perhaps clasped in an anxious prayer, just as they are pictured here at our feet? It makes all history seem true, and fairy tales true

as well, which is quite as important—or more so.

But about brasses: Sometime or other early in the twelve hundreds they began to appear, and there is one still left at Stoke D'Abernon in Surrey made well before 1300. But if you find one as early as the earliest here, which is about 1320, you may think yourself lucky. The lettering is in Norman-French, and makes you realise how hard a death this language died in England; later brasses are Latin, always the language of the Church, still later (Was the Church's influence less?) they are English, like the later Bibles.

Perhaps they came in as a fashion because people were tiring of stone statues as monuments. Perhaps the churches were being rather cluttered up with them too, since a statue had to lie in a niche in the wall or on a raised slab along an aisle and took up a lot of space. It was centuries, of course, before the Cromwellians came, thinking all images heathen and wicked and knocking most of them to bits. They took the brasses too, alas! and melted them up, but some four thousand are still left in England and thirteen perfect ones here at our feet in Cobham. How many there were before those destructive days we do not know. But for every treasured figure or fragment there are dozens of stones with broken staples and ragged marks, each showing where a brass had been torn out of its heart.

From the practical angle, these flat plates let into a stone caused no inconvenience to congrega-

tion or services, and the dead in those days didn't mind being walked over. Indeed, they dug their vaults under the aisles, and if they had money or rank, under the chancel or almost under the altar itself. And there was something about the shining brass, kept in a wonderful polish by the feet that went over it, each figure cut out and set against the dark stone background, that pleased their artistic senses,—as it will please ours to-day. The early ones are usually merely male and female forms, later, since all art seems to start as symbolic and then grows realistic and decays, these became portraits. You will think our ancestors a long-nosed, serious lot!

But they always show faithfully the gradually changing styles in women's gowns and hair dressing, in men's armour and clothes. You will find the lord and his lady, the wealthy merchant and his wife, side by side, and neatly in two groups below them, smaller, to show them children and, kneeling, to show they mourned their parents' death, the sons and daughters of the couple. They had families then! You can count nineteen and twenty-one children in many a brass, and hardly ever is there less than a round dozen of kneeling progeny.

One thing more you must see in Cobham, and the old lady will take you there around the church, the old Tudor college which has become a Poor-house. Every village or parish has such a home for its poor and its aged, and as Charity is always

a bit thrifty, no one bothered to rebuild a home as long as it would do. As a result it is usually the oldest and quite often the best-looking house in the district. The building has usually inner divisions making it a series of wee homes. Here they go around the old Quadrangle; grey stone built when Elizabeth was queen, around a most lovely square of green. Each home has its living room and a bedroom above, and through their doorways you will see a cheerful fire and usually a sewing machine as well, this looking very odd against the mullioned window. They're a tight little community with all their front doors opening onto this Quadrangle and I've no doubt there's a lot of gossip goes on. The trained nurse who mothers them all, they being old enough to mother and grandmother her, sits in her house at the entrance arch and knits and smiles upon them and the occasional visitor. Perhaps you'll like the old faces against the old stone work, for old faces to-day and in mediæval times look exactly alike, as you can prove in any picture gallery where there's a Holbein or a Rembrandt. It's only the young whose faces change, perhaps reflecting the new thoughts of the constantly new period.

And now we must find our way down to Maidstone, using the Ordnance map to take the side road that runs through Aylesford. You'll meet the Medway here once more, you'll cross it over the most extraordinary bridge built on pointed arches to a curious hump in the centre, with places over

the buttresses that may have been for wee chapels, but were more likely there to give the pedestrian a chance of escaping cavalcades of horses. Honk your loudest before you go over the bridge, there's room for only one car or one wagon at a time.

NEAR COLDRUM, AYLESFORD AND KIT'S COTY HOUSE

For this reason the bridge that has served its town faithfully for nearly six centuries is probably doomed—unless they'll leave it and build a new one and another road.

A bridge, and water, and houses has been a favourite subject for artists in all ages—stop across the river and look back at this, for there's no other picture quite like it anywhere in England. There's something about those pointed arches, reflected deep in the Medway, and the pointed roof lines

of the houses banking the water's edge beyond that an artist might describe as a perfect composition and a layman couldn't describe at all. It has to be seen—and even then, afterwards, it will be hard to believe that so much loveliness accidently happened.

Samuel Pepys mentions Aylesford, so he probably crossed this bridge, while England was peaceful under the Restoration, and a few years before he began his Diary, Cavalier and Roundhead pounded over the bridge and fought in the fields beyond. You can follow the story of Aylesford further back than the seventeenth century, which is quite a recent "period" for this part of the world; Canute and Edmund Ironside fought here, though the bridge didn't exist and it was more than fifty years before the Conqueror was to come. The heroic Ironside and the violent-tempered, poetry-loving Canute chased each other all over this part of the country, they fought here and at Otford, further down this valley that we are in and, like this, near the Pilgrim's Way. Ironside was probably winning then, for he drove Canute into Sheppey. But it was not the peaceful Medway, but the rushing tide of the Thames at Westminster that Canute commanded to return, by way of preaching a little homily on man's finiteness to his courtiers.

You can follow Aylesford back further; Alfred drove off the Danes on the hill slope above the town and Britons fought the invading Saxons. Hengist and Horsa passed this way, and Horsa

lies buried a few miles away at Horsted. And far back, to the mysterious Stone Age, great kings or chieftains lived here. One was buried in Kit's Coty House—but that is another story. Let us go on to Maidstone and find an inn, for Kit's Coty House leads us straight down the Pilgrim's Way, which is an enchanted way and deserves a little time all to itself.

If you can, go to England in the summer. Browning wrote, "Oh, to be in England, now that April's here," but he was in Italy when he did it. Probably at that moment it was raining in London, most likely there was fog, and certainly it was cold. Concerning the English climate, everything has been said, from the most fulsome eulogy to the most unprintable expletives and all of it is true. You may live in a raincoat July and sleep under blankets and an eiderdown all of August, and wonder at the imaginative fancy of the English novelists, who are always writing about garden parties and hot sunlight. There is almost as much truth as humour in the joke of the shivering foreigner who asked, "When do you have summer in England?" to which the Londoner replied thoughtfully, "Let's see, I think last year it was on a Wednesday."

Then you will get an afternoon of such divine warmth and such clear sunshine that there is nothing to do about it but go up on a hilltop and shout with the joy of being alive, and just there under the sky. And you'll begin to see that the wonder-

ful greenness everywhere, cleaner and richer and more brilliant than any you've known before, could only come from a moisture-laden atmosphere. You'll notice what it does to the girls' complexions, and how its softness keeps off wrinkles, so you'll not dislike it for that, whichever your sex. You'll begin to enjoy those days that are alternating slices of sunny heat and leaden coldness, and the haze that clings to the horizon line. And you'll not catch cold so easily—in other words, as the English say, you'll become acclimatised.

However, the country inns are more comfortable in even comparatively warm weather, hot-water heating (central heating) being almost unknown and not liked anyway. Choose your inns as far as possible for picturesqueness rather than plumbing, remembering that we can all have shiny white tiles, but few of us ancient oak beams. You must live deep down in a country to know it, and this is one way. Big hotels are so much alike the world over that once inside them you might be in New York or London or Paris or Chicago or Luxor or anywhere. But the English village inn is a mixture of comfort and casualness, priceless antiques and flimsy rubbish, beautiful woodwork and walls of embossed cardboard, good roast beef and bad coffee, all bound together with a never failing, soft-voiced courtesy that is *not* watching for tips.

If the inn is not an eighteenth century building, it is apt to be earlier; we shall be stopping yet at inns built, like the bridge at Aylesford, six hun-

THE MAISON DIEU OF OSPRINGE AND THE LANE THAT TURNS INTO A RIVER OVERNIGHT.

SOMETIMES THE PILGRIM'S WAY IS A STRAGGLING PATH ON THE SOUTHERN SLOPE OF THE HILLS.

dred years ago. But as the great coaching days began two hundred and some odd years ago, your inn will most likely be mellow red brick with broad white-cased windows, whose panes perhaps shine a faint lavender. This is due to an infinitely slow chemical action of sunlight, which takes a century to produce this delicate shade. You must ask for a jug of hot water—not a pitcher, "pitcher" just doesn't exist in the English language. Most likely your maid will greet you with one anyway, a fresh towel folded over its top, and though you might not believe it, the dust of quite a long journey can really be washed off in this primitive way.

You can go to sleep luxuriously, if the night gives the least chilly excuse, in the dying glow of your open fire. It will be "extra" on your bill, but never mind! So will your bath, that's a shilling additional and not very hot if the rest of the inn rises earlier than you. But again never mind; when the maid comes in smiling, with her jug of steamy water and asks you how you've slept, you'll tell her splendidly, whatever your private opinion of the hotel beds. After all, you'll decide, the English would never have been the sturdy, undefeatable race they are, had they been brought up softly on box springs and curled-hair mattresses. And if your very soul longs for breakfast grapefruit, console yourself with eggs, which are sure to be good, remember that strong coffee really is bad for the nerves, . . . and get out the Ordnance Maps.

If we've time before starting west to follow the

Pilgrim's Way as close as we can to Winchester, we might run south through the Weald into the Romney Marsh. Weald means woodland, and even to-day, there is a good deal of wooded country mixed in with fields, and in out of the way places the trees are grotesquely twisted from age. We can run to Rye and back in an easy day, with all the time we want for sightseeing. We can zigzag about as we please, perhaps choosing the villages because of their curious names, which all through this part of Kent are lovely.

The names, like the villages, literally grew out of the earth around them. For the houses are stone from the nearby fields and timber from the oak trees felled to clear a space, and so are only translated out of one state of being into another, in which they look as happy and are as much a part of things as before. It takes centuries to mellow alien material into a landscape. The names are never alien, they "belong" also.

We've seen something of the Medway. Traced back, the name comes from a Celtic word which you can spell Maeg, Mug or Mwg and pronounce as you can, which means vaporous or muggy, and so survives into to-day, and gwy, wy or wey, one of the various words that meant water. So the peaceful Medway is a muggy river! As for Maidstone, it has nothing to do with a maid or with stone. "Tun" or "ton" means an enclosure and often a house or village in an enclosure—those were the days when they built walls all around

themselves against attacks—so Maegwaegston becomes Maidstone, a town on a muggy river. Kent used to be spelt Caent, from the Celtic Caen, a headland, which your map will show you it is.

If you are interested in knowing how names grew, you'll double the pleasure of your trip. A name whose origin is known will tell much of the local history, and a series of books giving the accurate derivations of all the names in each county of England is now being prepared. The guidebooks will tell you occasionally what a specially odd word means—but up to recently the derivations have been guesswork, and some of the supposed meanings are very funny.

Remember these few parts of words, which will come up again and again, and remember that Saxon and modern German are much alike. "Ham" means home, and "leigh" a cleared field (sometimes spelt ly), "ton" an enclosed place of almost any size, "den" or "dene" a wooded valley. "Ing" means the sons of or the family of;—if the sons of the Malls went off and built them a house away from the parents and a cluster of dependents built around them, they would be Malling. Chester or cester goes all the way to the Roman castro and means, of course, a camp. The Saxons called it caester and did some odd things in changing about those Roman words. How about this—Roman, "Durobrevis," Saxon "Roribis," later Saxon "Hrofibrevi," in Bede's Chronicle,

going back to the fact that it was a chester or old camp, "Hrofescaester"—and now Rochester.

Where there's a chester, look for a gathering of Roman Roads, for here the legions drew into camp and had to command the country with straight ways over which they could move their troops. And where there's a Street in a village name (there are hundreds and hundreds in England), a Roman Road of some kind went past. The Romans said "strata via" and meant only a paved way, but the Saxons combined these two into straet. You would probably never recognise your Watling Street as the Saxons spelt it Waechlingastraet.

"Bury" you know from Canterbury, "chart" means a forest, and Chartham, therefore, a home in a forest. A "down" is a hill—presently we'll be all over the North Downs and the South Downs and the Salisbury Downs as well. "Fliot," or "fleet," is a small river and survives into London's journalistic street, built over a little stream. But there are many names for river, from Celtic as well as Saxon days, perhaps before. Ax, ex, exe, ox and ix all mean river or running water, and so does avon. A ford is what we know it to be, and Oxford means a ford across a river. Tam-is, a broad and quiet river, the Thames indeed. There are several Thameses, and any number of Avons. The Isis, source of the great Thames, has no Egyptian origin—it means only a very small stream of running water.

Let us go south to Rye. The roads will take

you through Smarden, which means a fat and wooded place, or Headcorn, with its street of perfect black-and-white timber houses and the Cloth Hall to show that anciently this was the centre of the weaving industry. If you want the point of view of those who lived last century, after you've looked at all the quaint gables and curiously shaped windows, the contrast of blackening oak and sunburnt white plaster, remember that in 1814 this was described in a book as "a wide street of mean houses." At least we live in an age that is waking up to beauty, whether or not we produce much of it.

You can see a Norman font and an early fourteenth century brass in the charming church in Woodchurch—anciently, as now, a church in a wood. You will pass over some hills, and come out into flat, flat country, soil that the sea is giving back to England. This is the Romney Marsh, and you should pass into it through Appledore, which the Romans called Apuldor, because of the many apple trees. There are Roman remains at the nearby Mill Hill and Court Lodge farms; if you can't recognise these artificially made earthworks from hillocks that just happened, you will in time, and it's twice the fun to go exploring.

After you cross the bridge out of Appledore, stop for a moment and look about you. This was the sea; from this shore Roman signalled across the water to Roman on the Isle of Oxney, the hill that you can see on your right, then an island in-

deed. Straight ahead is Rye, a rock that sprang up from the water, as now it springs from the meadows, its red-roofed houses clinging to its back. As the tide of Paganism rolled back, so did the tides of the sea, and a trackless Marsh appeared. After the Conqueror, when there was constant traffic, friendly and otherwise, between England and the Continent, the slowly drying Marsh became a wonderful place to land cargoes of forbidden rum. Hardly an old house but has its smugglers' cellar and secret passages, even the churches are suspected.

They were a wild lot, the old Marsh folk. If you take the road through Brookland, you'll see the oddest sight yet—a church with its tall steeple sitting quite quietly there beside it, for all the world as though the church had taken off its hat one warm day and laid it down on the grass. Legend says that the Marsh folk were not in the habit of marrying, but once a couple appeared at Brookland for the marriage ceremony, and the steeple fell off in surprise. There's no other story about it. You might use it as practise, until you can achieve the delightful state of mind of Alice's White Queen, who could eventually believe in six impossible things before breakfast.

There is no use describing Rye. You can take it prosaically as a town, in which case you will find plenty of guidebooks. Or you can take it as the fairyland you used to play in when you were a child and did believe six impossible things

before breakfast or at any other time of the day or night. In the first case, you'll read that this was one of the Cinque Ports which guarded England from the French, and which can be pronounced "sink" or "sank" according to how insular your English guide may be, and how great, therefore, his contempt for foreign pronunciation. You'll read that the Saxon king, Edward the Confessor, gave it away to a foreign abbey, in the generous manner of old-time monarchs, who could bestow villages and counties like Christmas cards upon their friends. You'll read that Richard Cœur de Lion gave it permission to build a wall, some of which you may walk upon, that Edward the Third was here, and his seven sons, including the Black Prince, that Elizabeth journeyed hither—until your imagination is so filled with kings and queens and sceptres and jewels and royal journeyings that you'll cease to be prosaic and Rye will become an animated fairyland. Beware! Many good Americans go there and fall under the spell and never go away; Henry James was only one of dozens.

The sea has fled from Rye and has fled again from its sister port Winchelsea, where we'll go next, a few minutes run along a level road. If you have time, take the one road to the pebbly shore. Old Winchelsea stood here, but the sea came back and claimed it and beat at the rock where King Edward personally decided that the new town should be built. Now the sea has gone again. You may go to the Cornish coast and sail in the

fishing boats to listen for the bells that ring under the sea in the lost kingdom of Lyonesse, which Tristan knew, and perhaps you'll hear them. For centuries they said they heard them under the sea at Winchelsea. But now there are piles of pebbles, and ugly bungalows, hideously ugly bungalows in such a spot. But if you walk about, you can see the ancient harbour walls among the pebbles, and iron rings where once, so long ago it's hard to believe there was such a living time, ships were moored.

Then go up the hill and through the Gate into Winchelsea. Never mind its history; Winchelsea lived and prospered and Winchelsea is dead. You will never know what quiet is until you have walked its streets. May a kindly God keep it from new life and "development."

# Chapter Three

## THE PHANTOM HIGHWAY

INLAND FROM RYE a road runs to Tenterden, and like all really nice roads, it has a turning off point, and an adventure. In this case the turning-off point is on the crest of the Isle of Oxney, where it joins the road to Wittersham, which is on the left. The adventure lies to the right, on the road that leads to Stone-in-Oxney.

Stone itself is part of the adventure. The road runs almost to the edge of the hill, then turns left to Stone. If by this time you have acquired a taste for village churches, you will like the one here, if not, you will at least like the way it is placed, the Marsh spread out before it and below it, and its village houses slipping and sliding down the steep slope of the hill. If you like odd contrasts; in the vicarage garden across from the church is a sacrificial altar of carved stone, left there by the Romans.

Do you remember how Roman signalled to Roman from Appledore to Rye? Oxney was the island in the centre of this bay, which is now a marsh, an important point, for the Romans had a large camp here. Go back along the bit of road you have come, but don't turn yet to Wittersham,

keep straight on, this road too, leads, apparently, to the jumping-off place. I'd not advise you to take your car down the hill where the road literally tumbles into the Marsh and the Military Canal. Get out, and walk to the right along the top of the sharp ridge. It is cut in scallops, like the edge of a fancy shell, they say it was the Romans who cut out these escarpments to make it more unpleasant for a beseiging enemy. At the foot of the cliff you can see where a road ran once upon a time; in a little while you'll see it turning and rising to enter what must have been a gate—once it led from some landing place for troops and supplies, which were then carried around the long way and the easiest way to the camp.

This is old country—though you may not feel it yet, and may even ask in surprise, how one bit of country can be older than any other. But language must fail you here. It *is* old. Why do we speak of a virgin forest—is it one that has not known man? This country has lived with man since long before Cæsar came, and that was nearly two thousand years ago. It is old with experience, it is ridged and furrowed. Once savages watched Roman galleys beach themselves just below where the sheep are now wandering, once the Roman, and again the Saxon, and again the Norman, stood here, while the sea went out and the meadowland dried, until so recently as Napoleon's time the British soldier came where the Briton savage stood, recognised this scalloped hill as a military point

still and dug a canal against the upstart Frenchman. No one threatens to-day, the hill is deserted, its sides are riddled with rabbit burrows, and the rabbits look over the Marsh to the sun on the distant sailing ships, or to the red roofs of Rye. It *is* old—you will surely feel it.

The road runs back to Wittersham. You can go on to Bodiam Castle or turn to the right at the edge of the village, where the road dips into the next valley and makes you stop dead at a toll gate. This is Smallhythe—which means a small harbour. The Rother Ditch, which you will most likely cross here without knowing it, was once the river Rother itself—the Celtic words Rhuid-dwr or red water, are supposed to be the ancestors of its name. But the Rother now runs south and not north of the Isle of Oxney; you can jump the Ditch easily in many places, it is so narrow. But here the sea came in, and here was once a prosperous village of ship builders, where now there are five houses and a church. Smallhythe belonged to Tenterden, and Tenterden belonged to Rye, so when Rye asked for ships or men, Smallhythe had to contribute its quota. A mile away in the hills where there's no real road, but only a path through the trees, I've talked to people who never had seen a railway train, who didn't even care much about seeing one. Little does Smallhythe bother about the world!

But about the toll gate—it's a descendant of the toll bridge over the ancient River Rother,

built in a day when any petty lord of the district could set up a barrier and collect toll of those who went through. This gate is still privately owned, the government has nothing to do with it. There are only a few left in England. You could start a suit to recover your money—it's a farthing if you're a pedestrian, and a horse is sixpence, I think a motor is a shilling—and you would unearth statutes and legal formulæ dealing with road traffic as far back as laws on these subjects were written in England. You might, if you had the time, get a lot of fun out of it, and certainly a large knowledge of mediæval customs. You might even win and abolish the toll gate. And what a pity that would be, for after all it's rather nice to pay a farthing, or even sixpence or a shilling, to come in contact with this left-over bit of an antique graft. And the fact that nobody does bother to do anything about it is another one of those inexplicable things which, like the Waterlane at Ospringe, will help to explain England to you.

The road goes through Tenterden, and if you are growing tired, there are several quick ways back to Maidstone. If not, you'll like the church of St. Mildred here, not so much because it is one of the best village churches in the Perpendicular style, as because of its setting among black and white cottages. You may be wondering, by this time, why some of the beams on all these timbered houses you've been seeing, curve a quarter way round the circle. They are always ship's ribs; our

ancestors had an economical method of using up what the sea hammered to bits on the shore, and salt-soaked oak was already weather-proofed.

You may want to pack up one or two of these houses looking on the church, to take home. It's an expensive business, but many Americans do it. How odd the houses must feel, torn limb from limb and then expected to live again in a new and strange country. And how desperately hurt and lonely they must be!

. . . . . .

Now they will tell you that the only real method of seeing the Pilgrim's Way is to sling a knapsack over your oldest coat and travel its length from Winchester to Canterbury. And many people do; you will meet parties of them there almost any fine summer afternoon. The whole of it has now been traced and books written about it and maps made, and presently the feet of the more romantic of our British brothers will have stamped the Way clearly its entire length, and something else will have been saved for the future. But we can only touch it in spots, as we can only touch England here and there; our imagination must go where our feet can't or our motor car refuses.

From Maidstone, go to Kit's Coty House, a mile or so away. Do you remember the steel engraving of it in Chapter One of whichever school history of England you first read? It was to show you how very crude and savage and uncivilised and ignorant were the barbarians who made such

a tomb and whom Cæsar found. But were they? The school histories that I remember made the ancient Briton and the Druid culture abstract and generally dull. Was it? Go to Kit's Coty House—you can't miss it, even if you haven't the Ordnance Map with you—and the Briton will live and the Druid culture will be a mystery you would like to solve.

Anciently it was called Ked Coit (or Coed) meaning a hollow dolmen in a wood, coit or coed being a wood. I saw it first in a newly shaved field of wheat, gold under golden sunlight, with red poppies everywhere that had sprung up and blossomed since the mower passed and the wheat was stacked. It is three great stones and a cap-stone, and as true as modern science could ever place it, it faces the rising sun at its solstice. Once a king, or a chieftain, or some very great man was buried here, once, they say, it was inside a mound of earth, many such monuments are still beneath earth barrows. But it was dug out, and no museum can show you the burial urn or the doubled-up body of the personage for whom this tomb was made. A few centuries ago the word House was added to Kit's Coty.

This can start you on the Pilgrim's Way, which runs near it, and is related. The motor road will take you back again into Aylesford, and past the Countless Stones, so called because there was a legend that no one could add up their number. The logical present-day generation does it with

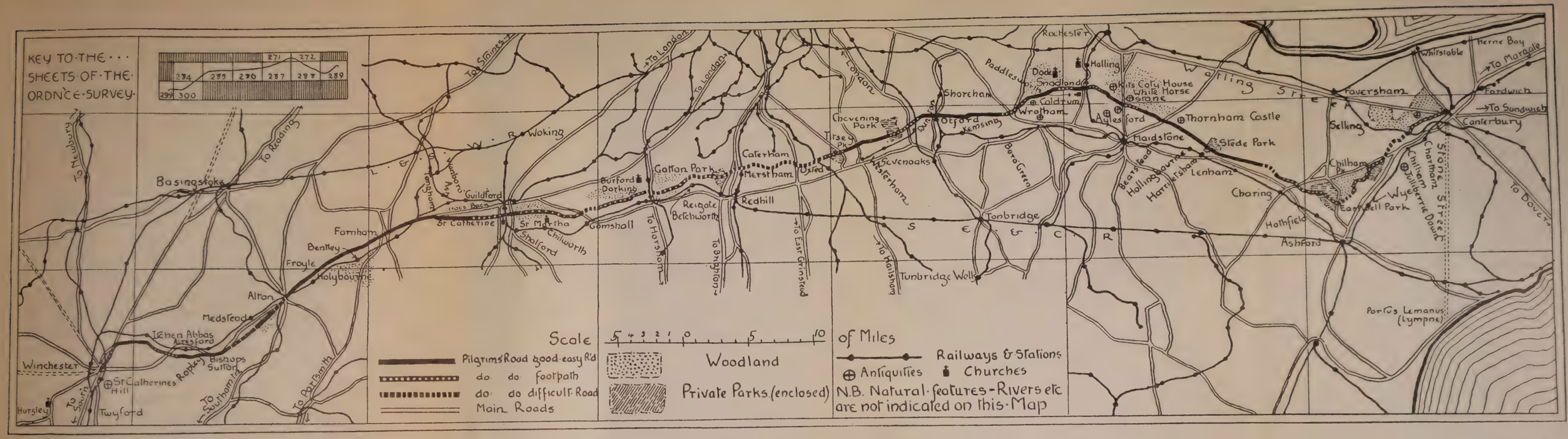
chalk, but I counted them three times after a storm had blurred the numerals and the answer was always different. But perhaps I was afraid the sum would come out "right" and spoil the tradition. It's a shame to take advantage of a good story with a piece of chalk!

From Aylesford the road runs a mile or so to the main highway from Maidstone to Sevenoaks, an ancient and a straight road, said to be Roman, though the Roman Britain Map, which confesses itself incomplete, has not yet put it on. Turn west towards Sevenoaks, and where, at Wrotham Heath, the London Road leads right, follow it to the crossroads halfway up the long hill at the edge of Wrotham village. At the crossroads, two roads lead off to the right, one a real road that goes up the hill and on to Chatham and incidentally, quite near Cobham; the other doesn't look like a road at all, though you can easily turn your car into it. And it isn't a road, it's the Pilgrim's Way.

For a moment it's like a country lane; there are a few new houses, and cars use the first quarter mile or so. But then it's like no lane you've ever been on before. It runs between thick, ancient hedges, old trees stretch low arms across it, it rises and dips and rises and dips over the curious formation of the hillsides. It is a delicious road, a lost road, a road from another country or another time. Quite suddenly you have left all the world as you've known it.

As for those hills, whose undulating sides catch afternoon sun and evening shadow and make them into a striped pattern of light and shade, they were lovely when seen from the highway, but they have a most unearthly loveliness and mystery once you go into them. I have told you that the Pilgrim's Way is an enchanted way, now you will know that it's true. After a few miles the road ceases, and becomes a narrow path covered over with drooping trees, too narrow for your car. There's a lane of sorts on the right leading into Trotterscliffe, or Trosley; leave your car here and walk a bit. You can follow the Way which goes straight ahead, or you can climb a branch road which goes steeply up the hill to the left.

Now this is a forgotten road, a primitive road, a road that has lost contact with life and gone native again. It is so deeply sunk between walls of earth that tree roots reach out their gnarled fists over your head, and the shadows are black. It might be a road to Hell drawn by William Blake or a way to Gnomeland imagined by Arthur Rackham. It looks like no road ever used by man. But once we took a Ford down it with brakes on so the wheels were locked and we slid over the wet clay and ducked under branches and never expected to arrive intact at the bottom, except for the luck that is with old Fords. I don't advise you to try it with your shiny new motor that must be turned in at the summer's end, leave that by the hedge and climb the hill on foot. Then you will




THE PILGRIM'S WAY

be lost in it and become a part of it for a time, and you'll never entirely forget it.

And after all that, take your car down that little lane to the road that goes to Trotterscliffe. You can't miss it, at least, not if you have the Ordnance Map, which shows you everything. Go through the village to the church beyond it, which sits by a duck pond with a house on either side. It is open, go in. This is to please your guide, for it is her favourite church.

There is no reason for it to be her favourite and probably it won't be yours. The simple narrow shape and round-headed windows show it was built in Norman times—but you'll rightly admire more the real gem of Norman village churches, the best of them all, at Iffley, outside Oxford. It has shut-in wooden pews—but so have many old churches. It leaves two priceless carved chairs inside the altar rail, but every church in England owns some equally priceless bit of antiquity. It has a carved Poor Box that has received charity for centuries—you'll see other Poor Boxes as charming. Its one distinction is an incongruity; a very elaborate pulpit that belonged in Westminster Abbey, and somehow, a long time ago, found its way here. Perhaps if you went to a late service, lighted by candles, as churches used to be lit, you'd feel the charm of it, if you miss it by daylight.

But Trosley Church can't be described, and charm can't be catalogued. There it is, against

the background of hills, quiet and divinely peaceful. And beyond, the suburbs of London are creeping steadily and stealthily along; in our children's day they'll reach over the hilltop, and the peace of Trosley will be gone.

But let's not think of that, for we're going on to Coldrum, skirting the duck pond once more in the car, twisting up the little hill on the left and following that road, or lane, courageously to its end. Use the map, for you must keep parallel to the hills, you mustn't run up into them yet, not until the lane, which is quite bumpy and needs slow driving, ends at a farmhouse and another duck pond, usually complete with ducks.

Again you must desert your car, for only one who knows the country very well should drive to Coldrum itself and attempt to turn round beyond it. Coldrum is five minutes' walk along the stony farm path leading past the barns into the hills. You'll see it soon—another tomb like Kit's Coty House, but larger, lost in the fields, known only to the natives, who say these are "Roman Stones," to archeologists, geologists, paleontologists and such, and to our ignorant selves. It is set on a tiny cliff, the huge stone that sealed its door is sliding down the hill, it faces east to the rising sun, which these far-away people feared or adored or both. And around it in a ring stood huge stone sentinels, and whether they were a charmed circle to keep evil spirits from the house of the dead, or had some symbolic significance, or were merely thought an

ornamental fence, nobody this day can tell. Some have fallen over; you can sit on them and rest or open your tea basket and marvel at their size. They are not native stone, but carried here a long way by people who used only flint to chip and shape them and had no machinery. There was once an avenue of these foreign monoliths leading from here to another circle, which is now a tumbled heap in the grounds of an estate to the south.

All over these hills where the Pilgrim's Way runs, there are remnants of the Stone Age. The newest theory is that the Way goes, not to Winchester, that easily traced road is only a branch, but straight, past Stonehenge, centre, or one of the centres, of Druid culture and religion, and on to Cornwall. And here, looking directly east over the fields to Kit's Coty House a few miles off, and along the southern slope of the hills where the Pilgrim's Way goes only a few steps distant, we might make a mental picture of all mankind as it passed in procession along this valley. A great thought—but then, this is a spot for great thoughts!

For Man came out of the East—either India or Mesapotamia or the Garden of Eden, according to your scientific or religious belief. He spread along the warm shores of the Mediterranean, and gradually, driven by need of pasture, or pressure of tribes behind him, or lured on by adventure, he wandered north. Those who came to England wandered northwest, possibly along the line of hills through France, which is the extension of this very

line we stand on now. They led to Calais, or what is now Calais, and the water between that point and what we now call Dover either didn't exist, or else was so narrow it could be crossed in the sort of dug-out tree-trunk canoe we think those people possessed. The hills led them on, tribe after tribe, using conveniently shaped stones for tools at first, later chipping them roughly, gradually shaping and flaking them to a fineness and beauty that you cannot imagine until you study hundreds of them in museum collections. As the centuries passed and the Old Stone Age gave way to the New Stone Age, their feet wore down this convenient track, this way along the hills.

It had many advantages. It was just high enough above the valley (which in those dim days was a body of water and later a marsh) to be dry for travelling. It was on the south slope, therefore it got the warmth of the sun, and the hills themselves protected it from the cold winds of the north. There must have been a First Man who followed these hills into the west, and a second man who followed him and a third behind, until the Way was beaten down with their feet and the blessed careless ones dropped their flint tools for us to pick up and read from them a little of that blurred page of history.

They left their tombs and their altars and their monuments, huge stones called menhirs or monoliths (maen-hir is Welsh for "a stone that is long" and your Greek will show you the other means

"solitary stone"). These are rarely from the locality—they had some feeling about a stone from another place or of a foreign quality as, indeed, we have to-day when we go to Carrera for marble or quarry into the mountains of India and Africa to embellish our buildings.

From their size, we know they thought these monuments would last forever, as indeed they would, except for the destructiveness of the civilised men who came after them. And once again we can touch the mind of that far distant ancestor. He resented the brevity of his life and sought to perpetuate himself in immortal stone: the statue of our most recently dead public idol is only the descendant of a monolith, but never as impressive and not often as decorative.

But Common Sense marched with the Romans, who had at least enough Euclid to know that a straight road is the shortest distance between two points. So the old paths that wavered and twisted as the first men turned aside to avoid obstacles were abandoned for real highways. The gradually civilising Britons used these new roads too, and Nature began slowly to take back the old ones. A few are left—this and the Icknield Way and ghosts of roads that run over Salisbury Plain. Here and there, deep in a woods, or lost in some meadow, you may still run across some fragment of an old track, and people it, if you wish, with those who helped give us, not history, but archeology.

Meantime, let us go back to Trotterscliffe, or Trosley, it wavers between these two versions of its name and the signposts impartially give it both, and take any one of the roads leading back to the Maidstone-Sevenoaks road. Follow it as before to the crossroads above Wrotham, but now turn into that village. Learn to pronounce it, and you'll have learned something known only to those who live hereabouts and to the ticket sellers on the local railway line. It's "Rootem"—never mind the plain fact that it has a "w" and a "th" and other letters that should count for something in its pronunciation. If you ask for anything except "Rootem" nobody will be able to tell you how to get there. And it would be a pity to miss this village and its exquisite church with a tower built over a pointed arch and the ancient brasses that shine brightly from the dimness of the stone floor.

From there, just by way of contrast, you might run the mile or so to the village of Borough Green, again on your main motor road. For Borough Green is new all over and a grand example of how ugly a lot of modern houses can be, with an electric cinema thrown in. But—Borough Green is on all the ancient maps of Kent, it was long ago called the Burying Green, and when they dug the railway line through, they cut into a Roman cemetery. So again you have history and antiquity, though you would certainly never suspect it.

But down the road a mile or so is Ightham, pronounced "Item," and once more black and white

timber and thatch, leaded windows and Gothic doorways lead you back into the romantic England you have come to see. Ightham has been spelt more ways than any other village in all Kent. Item is one way, that makes its pronunciation logical, which is more than can be said for most of these old places, others are Eightham and Eyotham. As to what it means, there's a guess for every way of spelling—but the church, and therefore the original village, stands on a little hill that rises from flat meadowland. When the meadow was all water this was an island—and "eyot" meant an island. There are many little islands in rivers still called "eyot"; there's one off Chiswick Mall in London pronounced like the numeral eight. Was Eyotham then an island home? Perhaps—it's as good a guess as most put forward to explain it.

Now that's a church you should see too, for within is a most lovely statue of a knight in full armour, quite perfect, not defiled by the initials of nineteenth-century vandals, who has rested peacefully by the altar for many centuries, in fact since 1340. And if you have time to linger in this part of England, you should study the tombstones, which are different from those in other parts of the country, indeed, from those in other parts of Kent. It seems odd to think that there are fashions in tombstones, and local fashions at that. Many of these are cut at the top like the outline of a head and shoulders, and a lot of them have

queer caricatures of heads in the round bits at the top. A double stone, that is, one with two heads, serves for husband and wife, with a man's and a woman's head carved in the round bits. And in one churchyard a husband has laid him down, more or less snugly, between two wives, under a triple-top stone, which, with their three heads carved, serves economically for the lot of them. In Seal, where we'll be presently, some one who must have died of a tobacco heart had himself carved smoking a pipe!

You can trace the history of democracy in tombstones, for in the very old days only the nobility and the gentry were buried in style. The poor and the common people were put in holes in the ground—sacred ground to be sure, since it lay within the church enclosure, but unmarked—for who would care where lay the remains of the ordinary man? Lord or squire, or merchant rich enough to purchase the privilege, might seek a sort of cold sociability inside the church, and hand on his name carved in marble or brass. But the commoner of England was always more nearly equal to his lord than the commoner of other nations, and spoke his mind to his superiors on occasion, as Shakespeare shows. And when he felt his equality strongly enough, or that Death levelled all men, he, too, put up carved stone over his dead body and left his name for his descendants to read and be proud of.

The eighteenth century, which elaborated every-

thing, and made even Nature exquisitely artificial, also beautified its tombstones. It carved cherubs on them to smile at you a symbol of heavenly immortality, and a skull to grin at you the cynical frustration of death. It used a serpent swallowing its tail, classic symbol of eternity, or an hour-glass

THE PILGRIM'S WAY NEAR GUILDFORD

for the passing of Time, and surrounded them all with garlands of carved flowers.

But let us go on! From Ightham Church the road crosses the valley to the hills again, and the first left-hand turning leads you to Kemsing. You'll know now when you get on the Pilgrim's Way, for it comes to you out of the fields, a path bordered with trees, shadowed deeply with green, and becomes at once your motor road. This bit has always been used—you'll wonder how it ever turned aside to run for miles just a few feet away from its original path.

Kemsing Church will show you Saxon work. A

sacred well of the coldest and clearest and most delicious water is in the heart of the village, where legend says Saint Etheldreda, the Saxon princess, performed miracles—long before the Conqueror came. Beyond is a village called, for some unknown reason, Noah's Ark. But don't go—it should be a romantic, or at least an amusing, toy-like village, and it isn't.

Go to Seal, where you join the main motor road you've turned away from so often. And on through Sevenoaks and on west to Guildford. There are places *here!* There's St. Martha's on its high hill, and a path under the pines that leads to it from the Pilgrim's Way, a path of silver sand and slippery brown pine needles, of delicious odours and cool shadows, and when the top is reached, a view over most of southeast England. Legend says the church was placed on this steep height to make it more difficult for the pilgrims, who of course had to stop and pray wherever there was a wayside church or chapel. But the church antedates the Canterbury pilgrim and it's more likely it was perched here as a "lookout," since places of worship in ancient days had their practical uses too.

And speaking of pilgrims, you go next through Shalford, now practically a suburb of Guildford. Bunyan lived here, and they say many of his ideas for "Pilgrim's Progress" came from here—the famous Shalford Fair became his Vanity Fair, and there's a marshy bit that many books tell you

seriously was his Slough of Despond. Oh, there are many such links with history and legend here—if you can linger to learn the country. If not, go on through Guildford and over the Hog's Back, and on again, until the most alluring looking road points you south to Winchester.

For with Winchester we leave the little songs, the short pieces, knowing England more intimately than if we had rushed from cathedral to cathedral, from town to town. Winchester and Salisbury are at the end of our Pilgrim's Road, but they are again the symphony.

# Chapter Four

## RELIGION IN THREE AGES

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL is the result of both simple faith and Norman blood and you may decide when you've seen it which influence was the strongest. It does not aspire boldly into the clouds, as does Salisbury, which is younger and of a generation that asked more of earth as well as heaven; it lies in the flat of a valley, very long, very low, and of an immense solidity, a real Rock of Faith to which bewildered souls might cling. There is nothing to carry your eyes or your spirit upwards, but much to make you contented with what's around you. That is simplicity, and that, also, is Christianity.

To feel its massiveness, walk around the outside of it first, as you did at Canterbury, and look at it from different parts of the Close. Keep in your memory this flat roof, the thick walls of the Norman transepts that need little or no buttressing, their round-headed arches and windows and the almost complete absence of ornamentation. This is your first analytical step in English architecture, all this will be different when you reach Salisbury, only 20 miles or so in distance and a mere century and a half in time. There you will

find Gothic in its first flowering; here, the end of what the Normans made of Roman architecture.

Not that their style was decadent! Decadence is an ever growing weakness and the Norman was all strength. They had in their blood the traditions of classic Rome, which was not built in a day but was made for eternity. Hence their thick pillars, their round arches which only settled more firmly under a crushing weight, their solid walls. But unlike the Romans, they wanted height, and to an extent they got it by making their walls thicker and higher, by sacrificing overhead vaulting for a plain wooden roof that would not break down their masonry, by large windows in the clerestory, which gave them both light and lightness; less weight, that is, where the clerestory walls rested on piers.

But either they were weak in ornamentation or else they felt no need of it. The Romans used statues, the Normans contented themselves with flat geometric patterns, many taken over from the Saxons—for the conquered often influence the conquerors. The star, the zigzag and cable work are easily recognised; if you remember them in this early work you'll see how out of them grew more complicated designs. And as you grow still more familiar with these little points of architectural periods, you'll find two rival capitals of the English Norman work (the capital is the stone that links the top of the pillar to the wall or roof above it). One is a "cushion" capital, the outline

of a square over a round, this was from the Saxons, the other has "volutes" carved at the corners which you will recognise as rather crude descendants of the delicately modelled Corinthian carvings. Eventually the "volute" carving won, as you will see.

So much for the Norman! But when you enter the cathedral, go to the transepts first, for these are almost as the eleventh-century masons left them. Then your eyes will be so filled with this period of work that you will never forget it. Afterwards you may go through the choir, which is a mixture of different periods, and into the long nave, the finest Gothic nave, by the way, in all England, which is entirely Perpendicular and three hundred years more modern than the original building.

You may wonder at this, for naves and choirs are often rebuilt and transepts usually neglected—it was the same at Canterbury. The nave is the front parlour of the church, and the choir the intimate room where the real ceremonies are performed. Perhaps the bishops, looking about them for ways to glorify their religion and its House, saw only the choir from their thrones and the nave from their processions; the transepts were never used much, so they were overlooked.

By the way, the big central tower is also Norman, but not the original one. That one fell down in 1107, and the populace, who had to have some reason for such an extraordinary event, decided

at last that it fell because King William Rufus, the Redbeard, had been buried here in spite of his unchristian life. He had been shot by an arrow while hunting in the nearby New Forest, which his father, the Conqueror, had planted. The tower, however, seems to have stood up under—or wouldn't it be over?—this disgrace for some seven years before it gave way. The new tower is less sensitive, or else none but saints have been buried in Winchester these past eight centuries.

But for all their skill, these ancient architects founded their house of religion, not on shifting sand, but on a marsh. And no one paid much attention until twenty years ago, when the foundations became weak and they discovered the cathedral to be resting on piles, or tree trunks, set in soft and very watery soil, so very watery that much of the work of underpinning the building was done by divers! And now it rests upon good solid cement.

In Winchester you will meet King Alfred again, and Canute, and many other Saxon kings. Alfred founded one of the pre-Conquest cathedrals. He was buried here with Canute, Edward the Elder, Egbert, and others. In the presbytery, the part of the choir where the High Altar is, you will see a series of chests, which contain the bones of these ancient and almost legendary figures. They were collected by one of the Norman bishops who, however he may have despised the conquered barbarians, at least reverenced their kings. But they

were scattered again by Cromwell's soldiers, who reverenced nothing, and collected again, poor bones, to rest in peace until the next cataclysm shall come.

In Winchester you will meet King Arthur, too, and in the county hall is his Round Table. But with all the good will and the most willing imagination, it will be hard to believe in this. Experts say the table actually dates from King Stephen, which being very early twelfth century, is certainly old enough for any table, though the designs on it were painted in Tudor days. But if you want to believe *very* much—there's a story that this was copied from the real Round Table, which would have been very ancient even in Stephen's time.

And in Winchester you will meet a Mother Goose verse. You have been in the Cathedral Church of St. Swithin, and you'll remember the rhyme at once—

> St. Swithin's day, if thou dost rain
> For forty days it will remain.
> St. Swithin's day, if thou be fair
> For forty days 'twill rain na mair.

Now whenever this jingle was written, and from its wording it can't have been more than a few hundred years, it seems to embody a legend going far back into mediæval times. Exactly why this holy saint should take an interest in the weather for the forty days following that of his "transla-

tion" on the 15th of July, it is impossible to find out. Perhaps old-time weather prophets found something logical in the behaviour of the elements during the six weeks or so after the saint's day. More likely a very ancient legend, even a prehistoric one, concerning midsummer weather, attached itself to his name and survived, for there are similar legends in France and Flanders and Germany, each, however, naming a different day. Should you be here in mid-July, you might amuse yourself checking up the rest of the summer's weather.

Beyond this most doubtful connection with fair days or foul we know little of Swithin. He was tutor and friend of the Saxon king Ethelwulf, who made him bishop of Winchester, and he died about 862. And though the good may often be interred with a man's bones, his eccentricities live after him: so we know that the powerful bishop's humility was such that he took all his journeys on foot, and when he gave a banquet, he invited the poor and never the rich, and that when he died he asked to be buried, not in a gold and jeweled tomb in his cathedral, but outside in the fields, in a "vile and unworthy place." In those days there was no greater humiliation a man or a priest could suffer. But a century after his death a successor dug up his almost forgotten grave and "translated" the body to a wonderful casket in the church, and thereby set up the only real weather prophecy we've ever had.

You'll touch most of English history in Winchester, more than in any other city outside London. It is so old that Hudibras dates it ninety-nine years before the building of Rome! However accurate he may be, there are earthworks all over the valley of the Itchen to show the Celt congregated here, and as six Roman roads meet here, it must have been an important place in the first four centuries after Christ. In William's day it seemed to be of more importance than London; it was on the other great road from the continent to the north, Southampton as well as Dover being a landing place for ships. In Richard's time it was the one city kind to the Jews, who were being murdered everywhere else, indeed, in such numbers did they collect here that in the Middle Ages it was called the Jerusalem of England—Jewry Street shows you now where they lived. But in Stephen's reign it was burned, and the Black Death struck it particularly hard; besides, when Normandy was finally lost to the English kings, it ceased to be on the great trade route. London won, but Winchester has kept her ancient beauty, so she has not lost entirely.

In spite of the Celts and the great Roman camp that was here, the glory of Winchester is Norman. It was a stirring time, William the Conqueror was only a small part of it. But he carried across the short distance of the Channel the culture that had developed in the south and spread through France, so that England is and always must be his.

Canute had come from another country a little time before and had himself crowned in England, but he made little difference. He was young, he adapted himself to his people, he took on their ideas, which were more advanced than those of his native country. William was old, others had to adapt themselves to him, and his culture was greater than that of his Saxon subjects.

William possessed England as completely as any tyrant of history could own a country. He took everything, he parcelled it out again to his own people. Behind him came adventurers, ambitious ecclesiastics, younger sons, soldiers, thieves; the hopeful, the hopeless and the dispossessed; all those in fact, who followed John Smith into Virginia, or boarded the *Mayflower* for a New England, who go to-day into Australia or Tanganyika. As for England, it must have been a madly busy place. Every bishop began a cathedral, and every priest a church. Every lord had to have his castle, every merchant a house. Architects, masons, glass makers, wood carvers, stone carvers, iron workers, had to be gathered, and fed, housed, and transported from place to place. Farms had to be tilled, horses bred and wagons and ships built. Altogether, the people who went into England in that day had as busy a time as our first colonists would have had, if they'd attempted to build a few hundred skyscrapers and city halls while laying out farms and fighting Indians and founding our thirteen original states.

Nor was that physical activity all. Thirty years after the Battle of Hastings, when William the Bastard became William the Conqueror, the First Crusade began. The spiritual activity of the time was so great it could not be satisfied with mere building. It had to reach out, and as they knew no West, it had to go East. The Church or the Pope, or the spiritual restlessness of the eleventh century, whatever you choose to call it, was really behind the Crusades, but the imagination of succeeding generations seized on Peter the Hermit, who came from Jerusalem full of wrath against the infidels, and gave him credit for the first attempt to capture Jerusalem. Actually, Peter was nothing but a great revivalist minister who caught audiences up into a storm of emotionalism and made them take the oath to go to the Holy Lands. The Church used him as it used St. Bernard, who preached the Second Crusade a half century later, and as it used even the children, who in 1212 started off in thousands on their own brave, pathetic attempt to recover the Holy Sepulchre.

It was a tremendous time, which we to-day cannot understand, no matter how many of their cathedrals we may stand and look at in awe. To ride away for years, through unknown countries, and hosts of evil people and evil spirits, was an adventure which makes sailing into the clouds in a well equipped airplane a very tame business indeed. They had, of course, the satisfaction of believing that whether they lived or died, they saved

their souls by their perils. They were also told they could fight and kill as they chose; the end being holy, the means were holy too, and that when they clasped their blood-stained hands at the Tomb of Christ, God would certainly pay special attention to their prayers.

They went out, of course, in hundreds of thousands, and those who came back brought with them lemons and sugar and apricots and melons and muslins and damasks and better manners, and mining methods and new colours and new ideas in architecture, and, which was very important, new standards of luxury. All of which concerns us because Salisbury, where we are going now, was begun just after the Fifth Crusade (the one St. Francis accompanied) and reflects many of the ideas that came back from the East.

Salisbury is Early English, a style which Rickman dates roughly from 1189 to 1307. It is amazingly different from the Norman. It has lightness, slenderness, grace and subtlety. You can see its delicacy, but underneath you can feel its strength, just as you can feel the steel muscles under the soft and supple outlines of a panther. If you like it at all, you must think of it as the perfect expression of Christianity, as the perfect expression of any idealistic form of religion. The Norman is beautiful, of course, but it stays on the ground; the Early English has wings.

Many experts say that Salisbury is the most perfect example of all this. At least, it is all of

the one period, having been started in 1220, when the style was fully developed, and completed—all but the spire and a few details—half a century later, before the purity of the Early English had begun to give way to the elaboration of the Decorated. The architects had learned much, they dared build up the great piers of their nave till their craving for height was satisfied, and then, by joining them with pointed instead of round arches, they could set their triforium at a greater distance from the ground than the earlier builders, and, by using the pointed arch again, build their clerestory as high as they chose. The great windows here gave them light from above and at the sides; the huge windows beyond the High Altar and in the western front, cross lights and new values in shadows.

But these men played with light and shadow, and were the masters of them. They built Salisbury of good grey freestone, and against its delicate colour, set slender shafts of black Purbeck marble, polished like mirrors. Their great windows were filled with coloured glass, scarlet, blue, yellow and vivid green, which turned to jewels when the light came through. If you want some faint conception of the brilliancy of those windows, stand in the nave and look through field glasses at the three lancets in the west. They are patched, they are dirty at a casual glance, but when you see them through the glasses, they burst into coloured flame.

More than this, the architects carved their stone for lights and shadows. Their pillars are cut so they are a perpendicular line of pale grey where the light is thrown off the round of a half column, dark grey where the shadow is held in the recess, gleaming back where the marble is set. Around their arches an intricate series of rounds and recesses give you every imaginable depth of light and shadow. If you want to tear apart this beauty to see how the effect is gained, books on architecture will show you pictures of cross sections of these arches, where segments of circles, from less than a quarter to nearly the complete circle, are used in a series of convex and concave surfaces. This, more than all the elaborate leaf and flower carving of the later periods, emphasises the perfect outlines of the Gothic pointed arch.

If you want to see the earliest part of the cathedral and follow its building, and the consequent development of its style, go to the east, which was the first completed portion, and gradually wander to the west; the west front outside was the last thing to be completed and, with its elaborate series of niches and statues (most of them restored, of course), shows the beginning of the Decorated style. But probably some verger will find you, and take you in charge, along with other tourists, and show you the cathedral according to his plan. But if you like wandering, you may do so as long as a service is not in progress, and there are always

guidebooks to give you dates and relevant anecdotes.

But I hope you are found by my special friend, the verger who always finds me when I visit Salisbury, a charming old gentleman whose heart and soul are so much a part of the place that I cannot think he will ever leave it. In some future time, like all of us mortals, I know he must die, but I can only imagine him then as "translated" into quiet grey freestone, happily occupying one of those niches the original builders designed for those who helped make the cathedral, or for those who have truly loved it. There is nothing he doesn't know of its past or its present, and no question, however ignorant, that he will not answer with the most charming courtesy. For the cathedral's sake he will put up with parties of silly "trippers," whole charabancs full at a time, or with that unfortunate type of tourist who thinks these things are better built nowadays with machinery and efficiency methods—for all who come to Salisbury, he believes, must go away a little better for the visit. He will be one of the loveliest of the statues I think, quite perfect with his gentle face and long verger's robe and great bunch of keys.

In any case, some verger must take you into the Cloisters and the Chapter House. Cathedral Cloisters were built for monks to walk in and meditate without the pelting rain introducing a worried or worldly note into their meditations, or to give them shelter to work in, illuminating manuscripts or copying books in those days before types were

made. They were always built around a square, partly against the cathedral, and usually sleeping or eating quarters open from some other end of them. The Chapter House was the conference room of the bishops and chief brothers and honoured visitors and such, for in those days (and to-day for that matter) a cathedral was a great business organisation.

The Chapter House is one of the great joys of Salisbury. It is eight-sided, like most, with a supporting shaft in the centre and stone benches around the walls, and above, the most enchanting series of Biblical pictures carved in stone. Here is the Bible as the subjects of Edward the First understood it. Here Eve tempts Adam, after the Serpent has tempted her, here is the Prodigal Son, whose story intrigued all mediæval artists, here Potiphar's wife tries to lure the unwilling Joseph to a bed, carved at such a tippy angle it might well account for some of the youth's reluctance. And all these figures are dressed in the sort of clothes the thirteenth century wore, which made them, not an anachronism to the people of that period, but folk like themselves, acting their temptations and weaknesses and triumphs as a daily lesson to all who came to see them. To-day we should demand historic accuracy, both of costume and story, or search for symbolic significance; then, they took the moral with the story, and that was that—except that being simple souls, they were probably the better for a good moral.

But however much you may love the interior of

Salisbury, you will return again and again to look at its outside from the Close. Like Canterbury and many others, it is isolated from the town in a walled-in open place, set in green, as a great stone building should be. The Close here is made up of many houses, stone and timber and old, old mellow brick—lovely houses, ancient and blessed parishioners of the great church. You can go behind the houses over the Avon (one of England's many Avons) and see it from the meadows, a view that artists have painted for a couple of centuries, and lithographers made famous. Here you see only the great tower, the roof and the top of the west front, but from the Close you can walk around three sides of it, and stand directly under that gigantic spire, which seems to lean over to you from wherever you look at it.

And if you were wise enough to have purchased a pair of field glasses, and the grass isn't too wet, the very nicest thing to do is to lie flat on your back and look at pinnacle and turret, niche and statue, carved string course and canopy, and the great spire itself, with the command of detail that only a good pair of glasses will give you. For instance, the spire, as you've learned, is Decorated—the next period to the main body of the building. It is more elaborate, but not as much as though it had been built a generation later. The tower rises two stories above the roofs, then breaks into the spire, and here the cleverness of the builders is shown at its best, for they had to make a smooth

transition between the straight lines of the tower and the converging sides of the spire.

That may not sound like a problem, but it was a great one, as you will see if you lie long enough on the grass and study the way these mediæval architects solved it. (You'll get a crick in your neck and never master it if you try standing up.) The tower is four-sided and the spire eight, and you cannot set an eight-sided spire on a four-sided tower and make it look graceful. Neither can you make a four-sided spire look anything but ridiculous. So the builders set eight windows of two different heights around the spire and finished the tower with a graceful little spire at each corner, with a certain amount of ornamentation and converging lines about all of them. In this way they broke the transition from one form into another, so that your eyes are carried quietly up the tower and over the break and before you know it, you've reached the very summit, four hundred or more feet above the grass, without knowing that you've crossed an awkward architectural place.

Nor were they content with this. Three bands of ornamentation break the spire itself—you may not agree that this is the best art; in Chartres, which excels all other cathedrals in pure Gothic inspiration, the transition from tower to spire is managed with more genius even than this, and the spire itself is plain, and one of the most divinely beautiful things on this entire earth. But that was earlier. When they were finishing Salisbury,

architecture was growing elaborate, the line, which is the significant part, was often hidden by the ornament, which can never be of as great value.

However, to emphasise the converging lines of the spire, each of the eight ribs is carved with a ball ornament—not quite a ball, either, a bud of three tightly folded petals. And you'll never know the thousands of these which cling to the spire and are so perfectly carved unless you lie on your back for a long time and study them with your glasses.

Salisbury itself is a story with a preface, or an opera with an overture, if you prefer to think of anything so harmonious in musical terms. Outside the town lies its ancestor, Old Sarum, an ancient Briton fortress, taken over by the Romans and again by the Saxons and again by the Normans, until the crowding life was too great for it, and New Sarum, our Salisbury that is, was founded about 1220. There is a story that when it was finally decided to pack up the town and move it into the valley, a bowman stood on the old fortress walls and shot an arrow as far into the flat and fertile plain as his strength could send it. Where it fell, the town was built. With all respect to the ancient bowman, who won England most of her battles and made her old legends the joyous things they are, it is still hard to believe that any mortally aimed arrow could carry so great a distance. Not that it's far for a motor, or even a pedestrian, given good company and a fair day. But for an arrow!

Go to Old Sarum. Pepys went there once, when he carried his poor wretch of a wife and one or two other members of his family on a tour of southern England. He got out of his coach about twilight and explored the place, as he also explored Stonehenge, where we'll go presently, and he didn't quite like them. Sarum is desolate enough for any one with imagination, even with the sun out and with picnic parties, or groups of scientists sifting the earth for coins and chipped stones and other bits of history. Alone and at twilight the ghosts of countless generations might easily come crowding!

It's a crater-shaped hill, a gigantic mound surrounded by what we call "earthworks." The outside rampart is cut so deeply, the sides are about a hundred feet and so steep it's an adventure to climb down to the bottom. There's a rim all around the flat top, where the town was, and somehow in this space, there was a cathedral, and not such a small one (you can explore the foundations which have been dug out for you), a garrison, a palace or so and nobody knows how many houses. It was a gorgeous fortress, as our friends Alfred and Edgar knew, and Edward the Confessor and the other Saxon kings, and as the tribes of Stone Age men knew too, when, somehow, they hollowed and built and shaped it pretty much as we see it. As a town, it must have been rather bad, and there was no place near where the population could spread. No wonder they moved!

Having moved, they made a complete job, carrying away every stick and stone above the earth, leaving not a house nor a family, so that for centuries the ghosts had it, while the descendants of Briton and Saxon and Norman slept at peace inside the walls of the New Sarum, or New Saresbury, which has been softened into Salisbury. But from Old Sarum you can see with your glasses miles and miles of the Roman roads, sometimes only dark lines on the green hills, that led here from the four corners of the country and crossed squarely where you stand.

Then you've Stonehenge, only a few miles away, and one of our last links, on this journey, with those shadowy men who tramped down the Pilgrim's Way. The best route is not the direct road, the main road, to Amesbury and on to Stonehenge—at least, that's a good enough road to return on, being a little too crowded now with charabancs and motor cars. The prettiest way is the little road running up the valley of the Avon, turning and twisting and crossing the river at a place called Stratford—meaning a ford over the river on the Roman street—and going through village after village, each one more breathlessly lovely than the last, and past part of the Plain, and finally into Amesbury, where you join the main road and carry on a few miles to Stonehenge.

Like Kit's Coty House, Stonehenge has been used to illustrate the schoolroom books on early English history. If you are disappointed at first,

go back again. The more often you return, the more Stonehenge will mean to you, even if it never means anything more in words than a curious lot of huge stones, a few of them forming doorways leading into nothingness. Some of these fallen megaliths have been set up again since the war and bedded in concrete, but many lie flat on the earth and many are broken. Why they were brought here, who brought them, how they were placed in these positions, are problems we are only beginning to find out. They came from a long distance—perhaps they were floated up the peaceful little Avon to a near point and somehow dragged over the Plain. The most modern of all inventions, the airplane, has now been brought into use to help find out about these things; pictures taken at dawn from a plane show shadows along the ground where the least rise of the earth outlines old roads, old gardens and farms, old fortifications that would never be suspected when one walked over them. That's ghost detecting!

The whole spirit of Salisbury Plain is one of solemnity, though it's an odd mixture now of the most distant past and the most modern present. There are literally hundreds of barrows, or tumuli, in view from here, curious round or oval mounds of earth, sometimes surrounded by a deep ditch, inside which the great men of the Stone Age are buried. When you get back to *them,* you speak of them as the long-headed men, who made the long barrows, and the round-headed men, who seem to

have driven them away into the Welsh hills, and who built the round barrows. In local museums are burial urns, charred grain, beads, utensils, and the doubled-up skeletons of some of these far-away people. Often the head is crushed in from the blow of a stone axe. They were not unlike our own American Indians in general culture and religion and might have stayed so these many centuries, had not waves of more highly developed people come along and conquered, as we came and conquered the Indians.

Mixed with these relics of a little known past are military camps, army huts, airplane landing fields. Yet somehow even these cannot spoil the solemnity of the Plain—which isn't a plain in our sense at all, but line after line of hills, soft in profile, bare of trees, where the shadows of clouds sprawl during the day. Beyond the outermost circle at Stonehenge, and the surrounding ditch, is a wire fence, with a gate and a ticket taker on the road. And after all, it's only a lot of crudely cut stones, with an altar and an extra large stone in a line so that, looking over them, you look into the face of the rising sun on its solstice. That won't mean anything to you, for it's not likely you'll be there at dawn of the day's longest year. But you cannot be frivolous in Stonehenge, not without an after feeling of having laughed out loud suddenly in the midst of a church service.

You can break this mood if you want. You can return to picturesque mediævalism combined with

modern plumbing, at the charming old George Inn in Salisbury, an inn that goes back to within a century of the building of the cathedral, and hides a piece of Roman wall behind a tapestry in the coffee room. You can be as modern as you please in your new motor car. You can have tea, which is a restful English ceremony, or cocktails, which is a not so restful American one that has spread to the Continent. But when you start over the Plain again, the spirit of it will affect you.

There is a long road from Salisbury to Blandford; it is one of the ways by which you can get to Glastonbury. It rises high over the Plain, it's straight as a drawn string, and therefore most likely laid out by the Romans; for mile after mile you drive down into a hollow, and rise again to a crest to see the endless road running before and behind you. It takes you past curious earth walls, with ditches beside them, that cross your way and run over the Plain. They say ancient tribes built these as barriers, or dividing lines, against each other. They may be old as Stonehenge, which is almost two thousand years before Christ. There are barrows too, sometimes flocks of sheep, and no houses.

It's impressive enough by day. But late in the afternoon, when there's still light enough to see, but dusk enough not to see everything, it's no longer a motor road, nor a way from Blandford to Salisbury, nor even a Roman road. It's a road that's bewitched. It's intensely quiet, but not a

sleeping quiet like Winchelsea. It's alone, except for its crowded mysterious past, which is always on the edge of the present. It's like hearing distantly the roll of muffled drums, beating, and beating. Only you don't hear them, you feel them, they beat against your heart and you can't get away from them. That's Salisbury Plain! Perhaps you can explain it. I can't, I don't want to. I'd rather have the ghosts, and the unheard drums.

# Chapter Five

## A MIRACLE AND A FAIRY TALE

THERE are ghosts in plenty at Glastonbury, ghosts and ruins, the Bible, King Arthur, the Holy Grail, and a miracle that happens at Christmas time. And more than that, but that is quite enough to begin with.

Which story will you have first, when there are so many? If you could only stop to gather them up, every town and village in England would give you its romance. But Glastonbury surpasses them all, and perhaps the only way to tell of it is to begin as nearly possible at the beginning in the good old fairy tale way, "once upon a time."

But our beginnings here are out in a meadow, and to see what would be the first illustration of the fairy tale, you would have to consult the weather, and if it is fair and has been moderately dry for a week or so, buy an ordnance map, and look up the way to the lake dwellers' villages. There are two near Glastonbury and you can see them in good weather. If the map won't help you, almost any one in the town will be a guide. But as far as the villages go, there is little enough to see—some bare spots in a meadow and signs of fairly recent digging.

To be safe, go to the Museum—go in any case, whether you try to find the site of the lake village or not. But walk or drive first to the end of the town looking towards Wells. Between where you stand and the Mendip Hills forming a wall to the north, is a perfectly flat green plain, with an occasional sharp hill poking itself up out of the ground. Now, once upon a time—in this case several hundred years before Christ and before any but the Phœnician mariners knew that there was an England—this was an arm of the sea, at least of the Bristol Channel, which is of the sea, and all the little hills were islands, and this large and rather steep hill we are standing on, with Glastonbury at our back, was an island also, the Isle of Avalon. Only in those days it was called Ynysvitrin, which we think means an isle of glass or even possibly an island reflected in the water, and also Ynys yr Afalon, the isle of apples.

With this ancient landscape in mind, water, a wall of hills, steep little islands here and there and some marshland (the water was gradually receding) turn back into the town and go to the museum. Never mind sightseeing, that can come later; Glastonbury's history should be learned chronologically. In the museum are many remains of the lake dwellers, and when you have looked at the collection, which is one of the most fascinating anywhere, you can go back to your ancient landscape and fill it with people.

Out in the marshy spot, then, was a village,

made by driving piles into the mud and water or by laying down trees. On this foundation the village was built, little huts with clay floors and hearths for the fires, some sort of platforms around the houses, connecting them, and a harbour for boats, so they could reach the mainland or the little islands or this larger island of apple trees. Their boats (there's one at the museum) were dug out of trees; that we know because one sank ages ago in that harbour and was brought up out of the many feet of earth that now fill it in.

Now why, you may ask, looking at their pots and jars and burial urns and chipped flints and at the poor broken skulls of some of the very men who dwelt there, did they choose such an uncomfortable spot for a village, so very wet and so cold, with salt winds blowing between the hills, when they might have had a nice dry island and a hill to keep off the wind? Well, for one thing, they were free of attacks by wild animals. For another, their men on platforms had a great fighting advantage over an enemy attacking in a canoe. Perhaps there were other advantages. And they didn't mind a dull life, nor the fact that when their piles rotted and their hearths sank into the mud they had to build them up all over again with new clay. Some hearths they discovered showed half a dozen layers with marks of fire in between.

There is a small book in the museum too, telling of the discovery of these villages one day thirty-odd years ago, when a particularly dry summer

had made the wet ground shrink, and had shrivelled the grass, so that those old hard-baked clay hearths stood out plainly in the parched and cracked soil. The two sites were excavated and the innocent-looking meadow gave up the tale of the villages it had hidden for more than two thousand years.

This much of the story of Glastonbury is *real*—either when you stand on the site of the villages or when you look at the things they lost, or left behind them when they went away—we don't know where, nor when. *They* are real—you can see the work they did and the tools they did it with. The next chapter of the story you must take on faith.

Drive around the flat country and come back to the village by Wearyall Hill, which is just on its edge. Beyond rises the great Tor with its ruined church tower on top, but never mind that yet. It is queer country; already you will begin to feel some of the oddness of Glastonbury, in spite of modern houses and an ordinary sort of daily village life going on around you.

It was the Romans, in their attempts to soften the crude barbarian tongue, who changed the name of this island from Afalon to Avalonia. And early in their occupation came Joseph of Arimathea, who had given his tomb as a sepulchre for the body of Christ, sent as a missionary to this newly found island by St. Philip, to establish the church and to convert the heathen. With his followers guarding the Holy Grail, the cup in which he had caught Christ's blood, Joseph journeyed inland

from some point on the south coast where he had landed. When he stopped to rest, footsore and tired on Wearyall Hill, where we stand now, he stuck his staff into the ground—and behold, it sprang into blossom, and took root and became a sacred thorn tree, that blossoms still at Christmas time to remind men of the eternal miracle of Christ's birth.

Joseph settled himself on this island of apple trees, which was clearly the place he was meant to stay in, or why had the staff flowered? and began building a church. Some say he lived first on top of the Tor, and later came down into the village—if there was a village then, as is quite likely. The Tor would be a fine place for a band of hermits, since not many people would want to climb that slope to disturb their meditations, but not so practical as a religious centre. In any case, the legend goes on to say that Joseph eventually built a church about where the chapel named for him stands. So with that we must follow him through the village and go into the ground of the great ruined Abbey, and past the aged Glastonbury Thorn, which every one says blossoms at Christmas time, and which like all this special variety of thorn, must be a descendant of Joseph's staff!

Walk first to the small ruined chapel at the west of the big ruin, the Chapel of St. Joseph. On this very spot the missionary built his church, a mere hut of wattle and mud, and around it, in a circle to guard it and the Grail, huts of the same for each

of his followers. It was an easy way to build, for wattles are only supple reeds or osiers woven into squares exactly as they weave them to-day to make into fences. They would form a slight foundation on which to daub mud or clay, so that, without wasting too much time, a man whose mind was on the things of the spirit, could construct for himself a passable dwelling for the flesh.

So Joseph came about thirty years after Christ, if the legend is true, established the first centre of Christianity in England, and passed away. And so did his frail church of wattles. But the story remained, and the spot was pointed out, and in late Norman times this chapel was built over it in his honour.

There's quite a lot of it left. It is of the Norman Transitional period, which means, of course, the breaking over from Norman into Gothic, when the builders were still experimenting with the pointed arch but really pinning their faith to the round one, and when most of the ornamentation was Norman. Under it, unless you've studied architecture, is a crypt that will puzzle you, for it has arches of a type you've not met with as yet. They are pointed, but are shallow, architects call them four-centred. The arch springs away from the wall as the Gothic does, but a little distance up, it changes its mind and turns sharply in to meet in a slight point—it is this arch that the later period, the Tudor period, delighted in, and the crypt, contrary to custom, was put under this

church some hundreds of years after it was built.

From this, climbing a slight rise in the ground, you go to the real ruins, the abbey itself. The old church of St. Joseph that we've just seen was built before the great abbey, and served it as a Lady Chapel—as a place just for the women, where they could come and pray and where the image of the Virgin on the altar reminded them that womanhood and motherhood were very much a part of their religion and that even prayers could be more intimate being from one woman to another. Every cathedral has its Lady Chapel, but usually to the east of the choir, or to one side.

The abbey is an overwhelming place, even as a ruin. If you look among the loose stones scattered in the grass around the walls, you'll pick up odd pebbles that once formed the rubble work between the outer and inner facings of the walls, which show the perfect fossils of shells and fishes. These were taken from the marsh, where the lake villages were, and were there ages before the villagers. They link you with an antiquity so remote it has only curiosity for you, and no romance, unless you are a geologist or such. The flaked flints in the museum that a man of some kind made are more exciting, but real romance lies in the civilised work of this remnant of a great church.

There is barely enough left for you to guess at its ancient beauty, and not enough for you to have any idea of its real glory or even its size. Ruined arches show you some of the walls, you can see

the great piers of the crossing, a little of the choir. You can recognise scraps of different periods. The abbey, from Joseph's time, was always a great centre, but the earliest work above ground is Norman. You will probably find artists sitting on ruins sketching other ruins or quiet people in corners looking soulful and meditating—but they'll not detract from the generally queer atmosphere of the place.

In the centre of the green lawn which was the floor of the choir is a small sign saying "Site of the High Altar." All the romance and mystery of Glastonbury is or has been buried under this spot. It is a good place to review its history.

About three centuries after Joseph had died St. Patrick came here, riding, they say, from Wells or Bath and not so pleased with the "perilous journey," and established a regular sort of monastic life there for the church workers. But whether this was before or after he went to Ireland and drove out the snakes, and where he got his immortal stick and where he drove them to, are matters for another tale than this.

Then came Arthur, and there, indeed, we are telling a fairy tale. But as Arthur, the real Arthur that is, was a sort of roving general, engaged in repelling the Saxons, he may often have come for rest and refreshment to the church at Glastonbury. Near Glaston he fought and was mortally wounded, and at Avalon he died and was buried. All this, of course, was around the fifth or the

sixth centuries, when the Romans had withdrawn their troops from Britain and when the greedy Saxons were beginning their attacks.

The Saxons returned again and again, beat down the defenders and at last England and Avalon were theirs. The town that clustered about the monastery they re-christened Glaestenabyrig, which many think means the borough or town of the Glaestings, probably an important Saxon family. In 708 (at last we can get to truth and dates, but alas for our fairy tale!) they rebuilt the Briton Abbey. In their turn came the Danes, driving out the Saxons as they'd driven out the Britons, and Glastonbury became a miserable little place until St. Dunstan came, a great churchman, who settled there, rebuilt the abbey again and brought prosperity with him. This was the middle of the tenth century and his church stood until after the Conqueror, who appointed a Norman bishop.

Now of course the first thing any Norman ecclesiastic did was to rip up his predecessor's work and start new—which, in 1082 was done here. But Norman was jealous of Norman; England grew prosperous, the church had money, each succeeding abbot liked to make his church his own particular work. In 1101 another Norman abbey was started, finer than the first. Alas, in eighty years a fire destroyed all this grandeur too! But by the generosity of Henry the Second, it was rebuilt, lovelier than ever before.

Glastonbury was very rich. With its abbey, its

older church of St. Joseph which stood in front of it, its cloisters, guest houses, dormitories for monks, refectories for their dining, kitchens, store houses, stables, palaces for its abbots, work rooms and so on, it covered many acres. It grew even richer when about the year 1000 the story that Arthur was buried there became widespread. When the last abbey was building, they dug into the earth to find out. Under the High Altar they found a coffin hollowed from an oak tree and carved on its top a latin inscription that King Arthur was buried here in the Isle of Avalon. What with that and the body of Dunstan, which they disputed with Canterbury, and the legend of Joseph, Glastonbury became a very holy place indeed, and thousands of pilgrims came, and abbey and town flourished. All this tremendous prosperity began during the time when Henry the Second was repenting Becket's murder at his tomb in Canterbury, and repenting that he had four such greedy sons as Henry and Geoffrey, who died while trying to snatch his throne, Richard, who acquired such an undeserved later reputation for piety, and John, whom all agree was wicked, but who got the throne of England just the same.

The next few chapters of the story are happy but uneventful, and can be skipped. The tragedy came when Henry the Eighth hung the wonderful old Abbot Whiting from the Tor—and when Queen Elizabeth gave the broken and deserted monastery to a favoured courtier. Little by little it fell apart;

it passed from one private owner to another, townspeople took its stones to make their houses (every once in a while you'll find an exquisite bit of carving built into some tiny cottage), its lovely glass was crushed into powder, pillars became heaps of rubbish, and finally, some one had the terrible idea that it should be bought from its owner and all that was left crushed up into small stone to pave the road from Wells to Glastonbury! This final sacrilege it was spared. When the property was put up at auction it was bought by the Church of England, and now, mutilated, a mere fragment of what it was, but magnificent still, it is safe at least.

So much for the history that we know. But what of Joseph and the Holy Grail? Were his bones thrown out when they dug the crypt under his chapel? And what of Arthur, supposed to be buried here under our feet? We have no proof of their existence beyond words spoken at the time and written down years and years later—but on less than that many a great religion has been founded.

As for the Grail, the cup Jesus drank from at the Last Supper, which became Joseph's treasured possession—that has started enough literature to keep you busy the rest of your trip to England. It seems probable that some pagan mystery legends became confused with popular ecclesiastic stories, having a point of contact in the cup which stood for spiritual salvation in the latter and the cup of the ceremonial feast in the former. This has

happened again and again, the early church taking over pagan festivals and legends, and even deities, and, so to speak, converting them. "You have been worshipping Hera, goddess of earth," or, "You have been worshipping the life and food giving mother, Nature," it said. "But it was really the Virgin Mary, only you didn't know her name. You have been worshipping the sun, giver of warmth and life—it was God you knelt to, if you had only known it"—which made the transition from Paganism to Christianity easy for those very simple minds, and shows how amazingly clever the Church was.

The Grail leads us back to Arthur. The earliest historian to mention him was a Welsh writer named Nennius, who "flourished" about 796. He said Arthur was a "Dux Bellorum," a leader of war, not a king, a general with a roving commission and therefore a roving army, fighting whom and where he pleased. Most likely he was betrayed by his wife and a kinsman, and quite likely he fell in battle. When we've said that, we've said all we truthfully can about Arthur—as yet!

But whatever he was, king or merely military leader, his story took hold of the people's fancy as few stories ever have. It seemed curious that the tale of him should have gone over to France and come back centuries later to England, very much dressed up with dragons and giants and maidens in distress. But when you remember that many timid folk fled as far away from the Saxons

and Danes as Brittany, it seems natural that they should have carried with them the tales of bravery of one of their leaders who had got the best of their conquerors. And a spoken tale is like love, it must grow and it must change, or it is lost forever.

Gradually as the tale was retold the number of Arthur's victories increased. He conquered everything; he stormed the very gates of Rome. In time, he fought his way into the fairy world, and conquered all the fears that peasant folk turned into witches and demons and evil-minded monstrosities. As courtesy and chivalry developed, he became the leader in deeds of courtesy and chivalry. He became linked with the popular Grail legends, many versions of which were told and sung at the time. You must remember that in those days writers gave to their ancient heroes the characteristics of their own day, just as the later Renaissance painters dressed their madonnas and Saints in the clothes worn by all the men and women around them. So Arthur's character changed and was brought up to date, like his armour—we think of him to-day in the polished steel and mail of the late Crusades, with a noble and thoughtful face, not as a wild-looking man dressed in leather and crude metal plates, as was much more likely. This is probably because Mallory fixed Arthur forever in print, when Caxton published his "Death of Arthur" about 1477.

You couldn't expect the monks who wrote the tales of Glastonbury to search their ancient manu-

scripts for the truth about Arthur! They believed in the miracles of the Bible, and it never occurred to them that miracles might not go on. Indeed, they saw them in their own church, they heard of the marvellous things that happened at Becket's tomb in distant Canterbury, the very air, at that time, was full of miracles . . . and didn't the Thorn bloom at Christmas, or thereabouts? The more miracles, the more pilgrims, the more relics of saints and ancient kings, the more glory to their beloved abbey. From Brittany the stories came back to England, of their own Arthur, buried under their own High Altar; they believed every word of them.

And there was the affair of the wooden coffin, sixteen feet under the earth, and the inscription "Hic Jacet Sepultus Inclitus Rex Arthurus in Insula Avalonia." They may have known then—we know to-day, who see the copies of the lettering in old history books, even in our little local guide-books—that it was the type used in Roman-Britain days, different from the letters cut in mediæval periods, and the kind surely used when Arthur died. It was a slender thread on which to hang belief, but enough for the monks. As for you, if you want to sift the tale of Arthur, to separate history from legend and both from prehistoric myths of the dieties of vegetation and increase and such Nature symbolism, and find out how much was Briton and how much Breton, you've got your life's work cut out for you. Much

easier to read and remember Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" or Mallory's "Morte d'Arthur." Both will bring you back in the end to Avalon and these ruined arches and this green lawn.

Walk around the abbey grounds, and take with you one of the little guides which gives you a map of the place in the days of its glory. You can barely trace the cloisters, and of the many buildings where hundreds of monks worked and slept and ate and studied, only the rough foundations exist. And even these were covered over with dirt and grass, otherwise they too would have gone for building material. Their outlines, where they have been unearthed, give you some idea of the huge size of the ancient abbey and its past activity, and so make the present seem more desolate. Only the Abbot's Kitchen is intact, a square building with a fireplace built across each corner, making an octagon inside—huge fireplaces to roast the meats and make the pasties that played such havoc with monastic waistlines.

Having seen some of the glory that was Glaston, walk back to the eastern end of the ruin. You will understand better then the present chapter of its history, the writing of which has been stopped for the moment. At the eastern end you will see some foundation walls of a curious shape which clearly have been recently dug up. After the Church of England acquired the abbey, a good deal of digging went on under the direction of the Somerset Archeological Society, the foundations

of old buildings were traced, its history was gathered together from one source and another. A member of the society, Bligh Bond, and a friend tried automatic writing one day in Glastonbury merely as an amusing experiment, and with no idea of finding out anything about the old abbey. The pencil began drawing something that looked like a rough cross, but eventually became the ground plans of the old church, and finally it began writing messages about the lost Edgar chapel. It was known that there had been a chapel for King Edgar somewhere and at some time, but that was all, there was no plan, no picture, no record remaining about it. A chapel might exist anywhere in such a great church, it might be built from nave or transept, or open out between the great piers of the choir aisle.

The pencil wrote definitely that it had opened from the very eastern end, and, writing always in the most perfect mediæval English, gave the measurements inside and outside the walls and drew a plan. The plan was different from most chapel plans, for the eastern walls had a curious slant. Presently, the instructions were fairly clear as to where the archeologists should dig.

But—where the eastern part of the church stopped, there was a very high bank, beyond which the ground sloped upwards, though more gently, to a distant house. Besides, it was winter, and the digging was not to start until the spring. Any number of people saw the plans and the writing,

and every one was interested, but no one believed such a chapel really existed under such a great bank. However, in the spring they dug—and they dug out the foundations of the Edgar chapel, with the walls at a slant, with the measurements corresponding to those given by the writing. They had to dig out the entire bank at this place, as you can see for yourself, for there are the foundation walls at your feet.

According to the writing, it was a mediæval monk speaking, a monk who loved the abbey passionately, and wanted its ancient splendour known. He told of the roaring sound of the waters on the many roofs when he slept up under the eaves, and of the bliss of walking through the fields in the spring, and of slipping away alone to go fishing. He talked in the most lovely archaic English, which you may say came from the subconscious minds of the men holding the pencil, and go on disbelieving the brother who loved his abbey so well he could come near enough to it to-day to talk about one of its chapels.

But the plans were drawn and the accurate description of the lost chapel was given months and months before the earth was touched, the many feet of earth that had collected above the remnant of the walls, and enough people saw them to prove that. It couldn't be "knowledge lapsed from primary consciousness," which is one scientific explanation for the odd facts that come out in automatic writing. Some people call this knowing of

the unknown "race memory"—another form of the inherited experience of countless generations behind us, which takes various forms.

But we dare not stop to explain the finding of the Edgar Chapel scientifically nor of the Loretto chapel, which came later, or we would never get on. Wells, among other places, is before us, and much of Glastonbury that we'll not want to miss. All England was thrown into a controversy when the chapel was dug out, and could be again; automatic writing and the ouija board being subjects that are sure to start a long and lively argument whenever they are introduced. The Church of England has stopped excavations in the abbey grounds for the time, so the present chapter of Glastonbury is unfinished. Tradition says that Arthur lies under the High Altar; there were records, now non-existent, saying that the wooden coffin was found in the twelfth century. Will Arthur's body be found? Or some fragment of a coffin and bones? Was there a Grail, buried deep in some vault under the earth, so the Saxons could not steal it? Tradition says there were vaults and secret passages. Where is the body of Joseph? The earth keeps her secrets well, but gives them up on occasion.

Whether you believe or disbelieve, at least you'll admit that no part of the history of Glastonbury is either ordinary or dull. Even this finding of the Edgar Chapel may grow into a tradition, given time enough, so that distantly future his-

torians will speak of the legend of its miraculous discovery and how the tale went that ancient monks came back to help lay bare the foundation walls.

You can be very sane and cynical and full of common sense explanations of everything you see in this Somerset town. That miraculous Holy Thorn, for instance, that flowers in summer and at Christmas time—is it any more miraculous than the yellow gorse you constantly drive past, that blooms almost the year round so constantly that there's a saying, "Lovers stop kissing when gorse stops blooming." Why shouldn't a hardy plant like a thorn put forth its flowers twice a year in this country where frosts are never sharp?

Still, you cannot be in Glastonbury very long without feeling what can only be described very lamely as its atmosphere. There's nothing connected with it, abbey or history or town or surrounding country, that is ordinary or normal. You've seen the abbey, walk through the streets now, and through the alleys that lead you away into enclosures where houses that looked on four or five centuries of history look upon you. Drive out to the meadows where the queer remnants of the lake villages can be seen, and look north towards the Mendip Hills, and at the oddly shaped little hills that rise so suddenly out of the flat grass around you, and to the Tor, which is over the Isle of Avalon. And finally, climb the Tor.

The Tor is a hill, but it's more than that. Surely

the Britons had something to do with its very odd shape, for it looks almost as high as its width at the base, so it is shaped like a cone. There is another cone-shaped hill near Avebury—but that is artificial and less than one hundred and fifty feet high. The Tor is a real hill and immense. It looks as though the whole base of it had been chiselled down to make the cone shape, and there's no way to go to the top but to scramble.

The top has been flattened out just enough to build a small church on it—and nice work it must have been, dragging stones and beams and such up *that* slope! But whatever the reason—it may have been a growing dislike of climbing so very far towards heaven before lunch—the church fell into disuse and the stones were dragged down the hill again, and now only the tower remains.

It's a delightful Perpendicular tower; it looks out over a country that seems, from its remote height, more like a coloured map than a landscape. On fair days the rivers are silver lines and the roads pale buff threads against the green of Somerset and Devon. The Bristol Channel edges the world on one side and the soft lines of distant hills on all the others. They say you can see to Leith Hill in Surrey, which is way, way across England. And on cloudy days there is the haze that closes in the horizon, holding within itself every colour in the world, rose and violet and blue and yellow, and yet always it is pale grey.

But go towards twilight, early enough to see

the country and look down into the town, and with time enough to see the light fade out of the world. If it is summer, you dine first at your inn, the Pilgrim Inn, but if it is spring or fall, you can have tea by the blazing fire before you go, and that is more romantic. For there is a definite sense of the past at the inn, not a "spooky" past, but a comfortable one of good food and ready hospitality, of mulled wine or tea hot like ours by the fire. It's a pleasant walk afterwards, and a breath-taking climb to the ruined tower. It's a charming view and worth the effort. But at first as you look down into the ruins where—perhaps—Joseph rested, you may not be impressed. It's beautiful, of course, but where is that sense of the past? Indian killed Indian all over Manhattan Island, yet who feels that walking down lower Broadway?

But the wind flies into the empty windows of the tower and you can hear it sigh. And the sigh of the wind on the top of a hill is a curious sound. On the mildest summer day you can hear it, inside the tower and over your head, though you'd swear there wasn't a breeze to cool you as you took the hill. And at twilight! Of course it's only the empty four walls which catch and disturb the sweep of the wind; if it blew through a narrower space than the windows it would rise to a shriek, like one's breath blown through a flute—and there are no such things as ghosts, nowadays! Science can explain haunted houses and all other super-

natural phenomena—it was here from this very tower that Henry the Eighth swung the Abbot Whiting—but ghosts are all imagination and nonsense and your heart is beating hard because the hill was steep!

You can reason with yourself as you will, but you can't get away from it, any more than you can get away from the pleasant enchantment of the Pilgrim's Way, or the reverence that quiets you when the organ plays in a cathedral. There *is* something about Glastonbury, and it hasn't any name. Your intellect refuses it, but your imagination and emotions respond to it. Its long Past hovers over it like a huge and shadowing wing.

We have no Past on lower Broadway, we have crushed it down with skyscrapers and trampled it into the earth with our millions of feet. We are alive, and we are the Present. Glaston is dead. It was killed by a blow from the great fat fist of Henry the Eighth, it died when the Abbot Whiting gasped his last breath here on the Tor. It is of the Past, it belongs to the Past, it has neither energy nor desire to change. And that is part of its charm.

# Chapter Six

## THE MAGIC WELLS

If you were given a World of your own to create, and in it you put one perfect cathedral town, you would quite likely place there either a Chartres or a Wells, setting it off by itself among its old houses and hills. Cathedrals in big cities are too much touched by modernism. Jangling trams and honking motor horns insistently remind you that you are looking at a left-over bit of the past, glorious of course! but an isolated fragment of something remote, hard to understand, and impossible to feel, with all that noise in your ears. And to love a cathedral truly you must feel it, it must touch your emotions as well as your intellect. Indeed it must touch your emotions first, for Faith, which the cathedral symbolises, never bothered much about Intellect.

So everything would be emotionally right—picturesque country and an old town to charm the eye, a deep and harmonious quiet, and the perfect church within the perfect setting. This is Chartres, high on the exalted throne of its hill, and this is Wells, under the Mendips. Of the two, Wells is the more perfectly set, with its bridge and Vicars' Close on the one side, the meadow behind with

the extraordinary wells of rushing water that fascinated the Romans and gave the town its name, and on the other side, the Bishop's Palace with defensive walls and moat. Wells is emotionally right to the last detail, even to the swans that swim about on the moat and ring a bell when they're hungry.

You will feel all this fitness when you've crossed the six miles of flat marsh that separates it from Glastonbury, and left your car in the market square to explore the town on foot. Sometimes such signs as "Picture Post Cards" or the more frequent "Teas and Minerals" will annoy you, being unpleasant anachronisms, spoiling the beauty of the ancient places. But somehow it isn't so in Wells. After all, you'll reflect, in the old days they sold food and drink to the travellers, and the stamped metal badges all pilgrims bought and wore home as proof of their pilgrimage. A sign announcing that teas and mineral waters were sold would desecrate the Tor behind you, but Wells is different. It is quaint, delightful, amusing and human, it has none of the eerie, tragic atmosphere of Glastonbury.

Now some of this may be because Wells is a place of beautiful details. There is no one great mass to stir your imagination, like the spire at Salisbury or the gigantic Tor. But there are thousands and thousands of little things to charm and delight you, and perhaps out of all of these you can build a love or an admiration as great as

though Wells had made you catch your breath when you first looked at it.

Let us go behind the mask of houses on the market place and through the old gateway into the Close to the cathedral. Wells gives you first a problem which architects have spent seven or eight centuries wrangling over and haven't agreed on yet. It is, should the western façade of a church be merely a *front,* beautiful as the builders can make it, or can it be a huge stone screen, hiding the building, but presenting on its great surface all the pictures the bishops and builders wanted to show their people? Canterbury and Winchester end logically, Canterbury with towers flanking the nave, and Winchester without. Salisbury is screened; later you will see that Lichfield and Lincoln are too. And so is Wells.

Go sit on the grass a little distance away from the cathedral and pull out your field glasses. You will never again see anything quite like this western front. An old writer said, "England affordeth not the like," and it is true. For though Salisbury is covered with statues, they have been rather badly knocked about and recently restored. Before you are more than six hundred figures, almost perfect, almost as they were when they were placed here seven hundred years ago.

Now you can see the value of the screen. You could not very well cover an ordinary cathedral front with statues; the front is dominated by its great window and its three doors, perhaps by its

flanking towers. With all this, statues would be trivial, having no real part in the architectural design, something applied, a trimming, at best but half attached to the fabric. So the builders eliminated the front, as such, and by the simple device of connecting the western towers to the façade of the nave by walls, they merged all the outlines, made of the front one piece and had their screen, on which they could place as many statues as they chose.

They had to accept certain restrictions, but being true geniuses they turned their very limitations to their advantage. A poet expresses his thought within the rigid form of a sonnet, but it is a good form and if he is a good poet, the thought is the better for it. The restrictions were good here, and the builders were poets, so see what they did.

They had to accept the heavy buttresses which held up the walls. Buttresses throw shadows, and those mediæval men loved shadow and light. They covered their buttresses with their best statues, to stand out more prominently against the big bands of shadow that striped the building. They had to accept the three great lancet windows which let in light for the western end of the nave. So they balanced them with lancet-shaped niches of equal size, with plain wall space; restful places for the eye to seek, and a contrast to the statue-covered front. The three entrance doors were made so small as to be merely a part of the detail work.

Study the screen in detail with your glasses for a little while. Not only is it architecturally a complete thing, from its plain base to its bold "string course" and topmost row of figures; it is symbolically complete as well. The longer you look and the better you know it, the more you will feel that one mind was behind the many hands that built this, a great mind too, for it is a great plan and marvellously worked out. Jocelyn built Wells as we see it now. He had travelled abroad; he was one of the important men of his period, most likely he planned the screen. He died in 1242, so whatever we see now was designed before that date.

All the secular and ecclesiastic history he wanted to teach his people is here. There are Saxon and Norman and Plantagenet kings and queens, saints, prophets, bishops of the church, whole stories from the Bible, more than six hundred figures in Jocelyn's time and many larger than life. The people learned their lessons without being conscious of it when they crossed this open grassy space; church days and holidays the figures stood before them, and when they rested here and talked after the day's work was done, the lowering western sun lit up the sculptured faces.

They travelled little, those mediæval townspeople, though some got away on the Crusades and came back with marvellous tales, and some went to the French Wars. But generally, the world was their town and its centre the church. The church spoke, they hoped for a better world, they

obeyed in this world, they believed every word it uttered. So the Apostles looked exactly as the sculptors made them and set them in a row a little distance above the lancet windows. Who could doubt that there were twelve of them when one could see their figures every day? There were the ancient kings too, and one reverenced the present monarch more because his royal predecessors lived here on the sacred front of the cathedral. The saints were real people too; probably one's favourite statue became one's favourite saint.

The people who lived in Wells had no doubts about the architectural fitness of the screen, when it gave them so many friends among the great folk of heaven and earth. It is a simple point of view, which we, with our reading and our travelling, may not share. We may argue that beautiful as the ornament on the front is, ornament is never as important as line, and line is lost here. We can prove our point a hundred times over with famous examples: Canterbury, York, Chartres, Notre Dame in Paris, and on through France and into Italy and Spain. In the end we'll come back with our glasses to this same grassy place and study Wells and agree with the ancient writer that England affordeth not the like—nor any other country. For a cathedral may be screened, or it may not, the old builders knew what they were doing, and the only final test of beauty is whether or not it is beautiful. And that much those mediæval townspeople could have told us in the beginning.

Being a place of exquisite detail, you must take time to know Wells. No great building can give you all of itself in a short time; you can live with a cathedral every day of your life, and every day it will give you a new and separate beauty, as my verger in Salisbury could tell you. But, if you are one of the unfortunates who has to hurry, you can get more in five minutes by standing in Salisbury Close, for instance, and looking up and up that great spire, than in fifty minutes looking at the west front of Wells. That is proof, you will exclaim triumphantly, that Line is greater than Ornament.

Perhaps! But sit there on the grass before Wells with your field glasses adjusted, and study those statues one by one; at least, as many of them as you can. Here you have an advantage over the mediæval citizen, who had only his unassisted eyes. He *knew* that the details were as careful and as delicate on the topmost row of angels under the string course as on the statues in the lowest niches, for that is the way they worked in those days. But you can prove it with your glasses, and have more pleasure than he, the angels and other beings who live in those lofty places being very lovely to look upon.

Experts say the work is Italian in character. England took everything in those days to make herself more beautiful—glass makers and builders from France, and from Italy, skilled iron workers and sculptors. Colour and gold work came from

the East, from the Crusaders, but centuries of rain has taken away most of this and given us back the soft tones of the stone. Perhaps these angels and saints do look upon the world with Italian eyes, certainly they are different from the figures within the church and from the statues on other cathedrals. Jocelyn would have hired the best, and Italy was fashionable in those days.

It would be wonderful to linger here under the Mendips, to spend day after day going over the face of the cathedral, getting back into thirteenth-century life as the artists of the time saw it. You could do it too, merely by studying the beautiful faces of these figures, where loveliness has nobility and grace has strength, and sweetness has character—so different from the nineteenth-century imitations and restorations, where sweetness is merely sugar. You can feel the vast difference between the art of those days by so small a thing as the folds in the angels' robes; here done simply, with what artists call a sculpturesque simplicity, with a slight stiffness of line that is not without grace in itself, and that is in keeping with the material. For after all, argued the sculptor, we are working in stone and these figures are architectural and of the building; stone should not be made to take on the soft lines of, say, flowing water, nor should a figure without strength in itself become part of so sturdy a thing as a wall. Go back to the twelfth century to Chartres, and you will see perfection in sculptured stone in the fig-

ures which support the pillars of the western doors, which are figures and yet pillars, which have bodies and souls too, and yet are stone. But in Wells, when the cathedral was building, life, or art at least, was becoming softer, so these figures are softer in line too. But not as the nineteenth century would have made them!

Let us go in. Bishop Jocelyn did indeed set three doors within his screen, but the real entrance in his day (as in ours) was the north porch of the nave, one of the loveliest parts of the cathedral. Again its loveliness is in detail; you must search the mouldings and the capitals of the columns for the figures and the designs which make it so perfect. You will find the whole martyrdom of St. Edmund in pictures among the leaves. It is so with the nave and the transepts, though Wells solved several great architectural problems also. But for the moment, let us go on with our glasses, and study the foliage that decorates the capital of each pier, let us find the fox who has stolen a goose being pursued by the farmer, the birds preening their feathers, the thief being hit over the head and not liking it much, the old woman pulling a thorn from her foot, the swollen faced creatures with doleful expressions and bandaged cheeks who are around the tomb of Bishop Bytton, patron saint of all those with the toothache!

They were master caricaturists in those days! You may wonder, as every one else does to-day, how such infinite variety of subject and design

was possible. There was less art in the past to turn to, in fact, they had turned away from what they knew and were creating their art as they went along. These designs are Early English, nothing existed like them before, and nothing since, until of course we come to our recent feeble and imitative period. Nor was the design of one cathedral repeated in another; the leaves that wreathe these capitals are like no other leaf design outside of Wells, nor is one leaf exactly like any other leaf anywhere else in the building.

The reason was that they built up their piers of clustered shafts, and set the roughly shaped capitals upon them, left the scaffolding for the stone carvers and went on with the walls. The stone carvers, who were only ordinary workmen and not "artists" at all, made their designs as they chose, probably under some general direction, but with each one free to do pretty much what he liked. If a workman watched an old lady hobbling over the green, stop and squat down to pull something sharp from her poor sore foot, it never occurred to him it was not a fit subject to be chiselled out of the stone before him. Perhaps a tale went the rounds of a farmer and a fox—and made them laugh—the man and the fox became a part of the church. One workman must have enjoyed himself hugely carving the misshapen and swollen face of a friend on another scaffold, for in all times have we laughed at an aching tooth.

What did the priests say? They didn't mind,

for they knew the dignity of the Church was so great it could not be hurt by so small a thing as this, and that a good laugh harms nobody. You will find many such jokes on cathedrals, even quite naughty jokes, and sly digs at the very priests who superintended the building. One must laugh as well as pray; it was one of the reasons why the Church held everything in her power so long, one of the reasons why Puritanism, which checked laughter as wicked, lasted such a short season.

The clock is another detail at Wells which will delight you and make you laugh, and marvel too, at so much mechanical ingenuity in an unmechanical age. Four knights rush forth at the hour, tilt with each other across the platform on top of the clock face; one is thrown and they ride in again, to rush out and repeat the performance an hour later. Twenty-four times a day the poor knight is unhorsed, 8760 times a year, if my arithmetic is correct. If you want, you can figure out the vast number of his defeats, approximately, for the clock was made by a monk, Peter Lightfoot of Glastonbury, about 1325. But the sum is too large for me to do!

When Glastonbury was destroyed, the clock was brought here to Wells. It was the joy of the countryside then, and it still is, and on the quietest day there is a little group ready to watch the tilt, or to see Jack Blandiver kick the quarter hour bells with his heels. Most remarkable of all is the fact that the original works of the clock in the South

Kensington Museum in London still run—they are probably the oldest moving piece of mechanism in the world.

From the clock, turn to the steps leading up to Chapter House and the bridge or Chain Gate that connects the cathedral with the Vicars' Close. Have you ever thought steps beautiful, or have they merely been a way from one floor to another? Straight, new, tidy steps are not beautiful, because a monotonous series of parallel lines has no æsthetic value. These are not straight. They are worn where feet for hundreds of years have gone up them, always choosing the left side, because the steps curve to the right to enter the Chapter House and you must keep left to make the curve, or even to continue straight on under the Tudor arch into the bridge. There is nothing lovelier in all Wells than these steps with the light falling on them from the windows above. If you stand at the bottom and look up, they seem to flow down to you; they are stone, and yet they are liquid and have movement. They are sculptured too, with as true a beauty as the statues on the west front.

You'll turn from these to the centre tower, probably wondering for the tenth time why those arches are placed in such a peculiar fashion under it. That's another story! The great Jocelyn died in 1242, but of course the work he planned on the cathedral went on. Six years after his death there was an earthquake, which does not seem to have harmed the building much, though we can't know

now whether it made weaknesses in the walls not suspected at the time. The centre tower was not raised until a long time after this, about 1315. But almost immediately—about twenty years—an alarm was raised because of weaknesses in the four piers supporting the tower, the great piers which stand at the "crossing," where nave and transepts join. Some extra support had to be put in, or the whole building would collapse in the middle.

Now as you know, the cleverness and skill and artistry of the builders of those days is shown by the way they turned an architectural necessity into a thing of beauty. The problem was, that they had to support those piers, yet they must not block up the crossing more than possible, for that would spoil the long vista which is the joy of every cathedral. So they built in a pointed arch under the existing one, and on top of this they put an inverted arch, one with its point downwards, that is, to join together the lower arch and the original one above. The triangular space between the two arches was filled in with masonry to join with the piers, each one of which is thus supported its full length. The weight of the tower comes down the new masonry as well as the old, and because of that marvellous thing which architects call thrust and balance, it rests upon the three arches as well as the piers.

What did they gain? For one thing, by using the inverted arch, they gained all the open space above it between it and the original one, which,

you can see, is a great deal. The lowest arch and the one that stands on its head above it, to describe an architectural tour de force in most unarchitectural fashion, give two curved and gracefully crossed lines which add to the beauty of the vista down the nave or the transepts. And then, to make the whole thing lighter in appearance, they opened the solid part of walls between the sides of the arches and the piers and let in a circle on each side. This took no strength from the masonry, but made all the difference between blankness and life. Think how heavy and dead a prison wall is, then think how light and full of life is the side of a house with windows in it, and you will see how the circles brighten each wall. It is like putting eyes in a face.

They did more. They used curved and undercut mouldings on the outside as well as the inside of the regular and the inverted arches, and on the outside as well as the inside of the frame of each circle. Thus they made the circles seem much larger than they actually were, and thus they completely blotted out their wall with shadows, which lie deep in the space where the stonework is solid. Look down the nave to the choir or from the end of one transept to another. Tons and tons of masonry block your "vista," but you are not conscious of it as an interruption to your view. Stonework strong enough to support a heavy tower these many centuries and for many more to come, has been given such virtues as grace, lightness,

delicacy, positive airiness. It is a miracle, only partly explained when you talk of captive shadow and light.

Again we can echo the old writer, "England affordeth not the like," for there is nothing of this sort anywhere else. Towers have fallen and threatened to fall, but nowhere else has one been braced in this manner. And that makes us marvel at the individuality of the time. The general characteristics of one style spread quickly enough, but never the details.

Of course, there wasn't much travel. But England was as small then as now, and where we go in an hour by motor, a man could go in a day quite easily by horse. Cities were no further apart then, bishops were always going back and forth to London, men skilled in cathedral building or stone carving were in demand and often wandering from place to place. So one cathedral knew quite well what another cathedral was doing in the way of new windows or another tower or decorations. Indeed, the labourers of that period were so loyal to their work that parties of them used to travel to whichever cathedral was nearest to make sure the other workmen were not doing something cleverer than they.

But did they copy details? Almost never. Perhaps they thought their own way was best, a habit of mind as common in those times, certainly, as in ours. Carved foliage trims the capitals of most Early English columns. It began with the stiffly

curved, half recognisable shape that was all the Normans left of the Corinthian acanthus leaf, and grew to a luxuriance and naturalness that was amazing. But like the leaves in the forests, each one in a cathedral was different. Crockets became the fashion, but each workman had his own ideas about how to carve them. Lancet windows drew together and the walls between narrowed to mullions and these took on flowing lines when the Decorated period came in. But the mullion tracery at Exeter is an entirely different matter from the mullion tracery in the Chapter House at Wells.

Yet, from the time of the Conqueror until, roughly, Henry the Eighth and the Dissolution, England was building and rebuilding her cathedrals. Everywhere, city or town or village, it was going on with feverish haste and constant change and development, especially during the three hundred years following the Conqueror. The wealth in the way of gold and jewels that went into them is something we cannot calculate to-day, we know that it was nothing, however, to the wealth of ideas and originality.

The builders at Wells did something else amazingly clever. As cathedrals go, this is very small, and the architects problem was to make it seem as large as possible. The Gothic arch, of course, gives grandeur and height, the clustered shafts of the piers and the deeply undercut mouldings of the arches themselves emphasise this. But the walls of a cathedral are divided into three parts:

the piers, and over their arches a space called the triforium, which opens above the vaulting or roof of the side aisles, and above that, with larger windows to let light into the church and to put less weight on the walls below, the clerestory, or clear-story, as it is often spelt and always pronounced.

The walls must be in three divisions, which breaks their height. But the main ribs that support the vaulted roof usually begin between the arches of each pier, so that your eyes go on upwards, unconsciously following the lines of the piers and the continuing lines of the ribs (which rest on projecting carved stones called corbels) to the centre of the vault overhead. You ignore the break of the triforium and its arched windows, and you feel the full height of the nave.

See what the builders at Wells did! They could manage the height quite easily by making their clerestory a little taller than is usual in so small a building. What they wanted was length, at least, a sense of length, from the western doors to the choir entrance (the tower supports were not yet in place). So they made the triforium a series of heavily outlined arcades with boldly cut string courses above and below to catch your eye and carry it the full length of the nave. Without knowing it (they were really awfully clever, those mediæval builders), you look from wherever you are standing to the curved arches at the crossing, and never dream that Wells is as short as its actual measurements make it. But the only way to prove

this to yourself is to memorise the length and breadth and height of every cathedral nave you see and compare them with this.

Do you like to see places that way, making a sort of arithmetical progression or historical progression rather, beginning at its earliest part and going on to its latest addition, and memorising its proportions in relation to other places? If you do (there's something in it, of course), begin with the crypt, which is usually left over from some earlier church. Start the cathedral tour itself from the east, where building almost always began. The east end of Wells was begun by a Norman bishop who died in 1192, who was a friend to the Lion-Hearted Richard and went crusading with him. He built choir, transepts, and was well into the nave when he died and Jocelyn stepped in. But the eastern part of the choir was rebuilt, and as you know, many additions were made even after the great Jocelyn had completed all the details we have loved so much. The North Porch is 1185, so Richard's friend had a hand in it, though Jocelyn may have overseen the carving. Wells is Norman Transitional and very early Early English, if you want to be explicit, with a central tower and Chapter House that is Decorated, and the upper stories of the two western towers Perpendicular. These were so heavily buttressed that originally they were made to carry spires, but for some reason they were never added.

More facts? The centre tower is more than 160

as it is, compared to Salisbury spire, which climbs to 404. Wells is roughly 400 feet long, Winchester more than 550. Wells is famous for its woodwork in the choir, much of which is fifteenth century, and for the "misereres," sixty-four of which are original. These are tiny seats under the real seats, placed so the choir boys could lean against them and half sit, while the actual seats were turned back and they seemed to stand. Some classically minded and once footsore humorist must have given them the Latin name for pity.

Have you knowledge enough now of Wells? The real way to tell one period from another is by the arches and by the windows. But fenestration, as that art is called, is best studied in the north, where the next part of our trip goes. Wells is less for knowledge than for atmosphere—the sunny, quiet, mediæval atmosphere it has kept straight down the ages to this day. There are not even enough motor cars to spoil it; at least, they do not spoil it. When you've done with the cathedral, the cloisters, which will enchant you, the three wells, and the Bishop's Palace, where the swans ring their dinner bell, go to the Vicars' Close, connected to the church by the bridge, so the vicars of ancient days might run dry shod to services and back and forth to work. These are being lived in and enjoyed to-day.

Every part of Wells is being lived in and enjoyed, perhaps that's why it always seems sunny and comfortable. In spite of the ruin of a magnifi-

cent hall in the Palace gardens, and the walls and moat built against an enemy, the Palace itself is intact, and there's smoke from its chimneys and often the savoury smell of a dinner. The Close is lived in by many families, there are attractive chintz curtains and glimpses of old mahogany in drawing room windows. The black and white timber houses in the streets are well repaired, and show either lace curtains or glazed chintz, according to the social position of the owner. Wells has no special tragedy in its past, and no fear of the future, it gives you its peace and content and its many little beauties. Which is as much as we can ask of any town.

# Chapter Seven

## YOU TRAVEL THE ROMAN ROADS

THE road goes on and we go with it. To-day it must be Bath, then London, later the North. We could, of course, go straight north from Bath, and following the Fosse Way, the famous Roman Road, almost every mile of the way, go through Cirencester (which, by the way, they are now beginning to pronounce as it is spelled and not as heretofore, "Siseter"), cross the Watling Street at High Cross, see something of the Midlands at Leicester, and carry on directly to Lincoln. Look at your Roman Map to see how straight the legions laid the road.

But the straight way is the dullest distance between two points, however lovely the scenery along it. And the best part of a summer's tour is that you never have to be at a certain place by a certain time, so if you miss London and find Cirencester or Gloucester, you've gained something, since London must be the journey's end. There is so much we must miss anyway—Devonshire, to which we could travel by a Roman Road leading from Bath through Ilchester to Exeter; the moors, where the air is so laden with sea salt and sunshine and honey from the heather that it is fizzy with

exhilaration down your throat and up into your head again; Cornwall beyond, where the Phœnicians came for tin long before Cæsar took it into his head to cross from Gaul, and where the villages spill down the cliffs into the sea. Somewhere below the cliffs is the lost kingdom of Lyonesse, where the fishermen say they can hear the church bells ringing when the tide is low—Tristan's forgotten country when he followed Isolde of the Pale Hands over the sea.

We miss all of Wales just across the Bristol Channel. There the mountains form ragged lines against the sky and in half an hour you can go from a joyously lovely countryside into the most desolate and depressing series of mining towns, and suddenly out again into scenery complete with ivy-clad ruined castle and nestling hamlet beneath, scenery like that painted on the backdrop of any good old comic opera. It is an odd experience, to plunge from so much beauty into so much filth and ugliness and out again into such serene untroubled country. But to feel it, you should stay around the coal areas several days, to let the bleak grandeur of the hills and the bleak desolation of the towns soak into you. Otherwise, it will be an unreal experience, like stepping from the gaiety of a country amusement park into the dusty darkness of its canvas "Coal Mine" and out again into the sunshine at the end of its ten-cent ride of artificial thrills and blackness.

If it means more to you than that it will depress

you and it will teach you nothing except that wherever man puts his hand commercially, he leaves an ugly mark, which is a lesson you need not come to England to learn. The Welsh mining towns are no worse than those of the Ruhr or our own Pennsylvania, and the saddest part of them all is that their ugliness is so unnecessary. Let us not go there! We have come to find mediævalism and beauty, the romance that lies in old stone buildings, to learn something of the Age of Faith and the roots of our own families, and therefore of our own emotional reactions. England, like other countries, has her crude and ugly places, but, like the faults of an old friend, let us ignore them. We will keep to the pleasant valleys and the hills where sheep graze instead, for when man struggles with Nature (as he did in the Welsh hills) and his religion is deep but takes on some of the bitterness of his struggle, he builds no lovely cathedrals on the mountain tops. But when Nature is kind to him, he gives to his God a Wells.

But though we are going north, to Bath and eventually as far at least as York, let's not go the direct road. Cheddar is such a small distance from Wells, and though it is out of our way, the way is a Roman Road running at the foot of the Mendips. We shouldn't miss it! The Cheese Cross is there and street corners so sharp and narrow you'll have to honk and honk your horn before creeping around them. Cheddar has been making cheese the same way these three hundred

years at least. It has that, and a pretty church, and its quaintness to boast about, and recently it has discovered the stalactite caves in the Gorge.

Now the Cheddar Gorge is a most extraordinary place. It looks as though some giant had taken the Mendip Hills in his hands and cracked them open, as a boy takes an apple and cracks it in half to show his strength. The hills themselves rise six to eight hundred feet above the level plain, so you have some idea of the height of the Gorge, which is so narrow that you'll have to steer your car carefully whenever you pass a charabanc. You will most likely stop at the bottom for the caves, for it is thrilling to walk a quarter mile inside a hill and on the bed of an underground river that has long since taken itself elsewhere. At the top of the Gorge, you will come out on queer country, barren and brown, with rough stone walls, and only very occasionally a cottage, a country that could not smile at you on the sunniest summer day, a country different from Salisbury Plain, different from anything you've yet seen in England.

But it melts quickly into pleasanter fields and farmhouses, and this soon enough into estates, and then suburbs, and in less than thirty miles you've reached Bath. To Bath a Briton prince came to be cured, the Romans built a temple and bath around the hot spring waters, the Christians planted the foundations of their church on the pagan columns, and continued to bathe in the spring. The Prince Regent himself came a brief

century ago bringing his court and his architects of a pseudo-Roman style. You can join the long historic procession of gouty or dyspeptic or liverish bathers if you want, or just for the fun of it dip into the waters that have gushed hot from the earth these thousands of years.

After Bath, where?

The Roman road goes straight from Aquæ Sulis to Corinium Dobunorum, which is how one of the Emperor's legionaries would have phrased it, had you asked him the way from Bath to Cirencester. But if you want to be tempted away from the straight road again, as you have been so often, you can also go from Bath to Marlborough and to Cirencester and on the way you can stop at Avebury.

Now Avebury is not illustrated in Chapter One of our school histories of England; at least it was not in my day. Not many Americans know it, and for the matter of that, not many English. Again and again I have been there, and had the place to myself. It can be fitted into an afternoon's run from Bath to Cirencester with plenty of time for prowling about, or you can leave Bath comfortably after lunch, climb to the White Horse on the downs near Avebury, see the village and be back in your hotel at Bath again in time to dress for dinner. Bath is pseudo-Romanism on Roman ruins, Avebury mediævalism on neolithic ruins; you can have both in an afternoon and tea into the bargain. You merely take the London Road, and watch the left-

hand sign posts when within seven or so miles of Marlborough, for it is a half mile or so down a side road.

We must go back for a moment to that First Man who walked the southern slope of the hills from somewhere near Dover, past Canterbury and on to—not Winchester, remember—but Stonehenge, that man who laid out the Pilgrim's Way. He was, so they think to-day, in the eolithic period—the Dawn of the Stone Age, the age when men were so unskillful they used the rough flints they found, as they found them. The English Channel didn't exist, they could walk over from the Continent, indeed, if they couldn't have walked, they probably wouldn't have come. In those days the North Sea was a river, with marshy land around it, and the Thames was its tributary. In the next period, the Old Stone Age, paleolithic men chipped their flint tools crudely, perhaps they had boats, for the Channel was forming. In the New Stone Age, the neolithic men certainly built boats, but they were very clever compared to those who had tramped down the Way before them.

However, they followed this convenient track along the sunny side of the hills, they worshipped at Stonehenge to which the track definitely runs, but where we lose it as a road to-day. We know, however, that they pushed on west, always following the hills that protected them and gave them easy going, and that they came to Avebury.

Avebury was obviously another great meeting

place for religious ceremonies of some sort. It was a huge circle of stones, oh, many times larger than Stonehenge, fitted with inner circles, and surrounded by a deep ditch, which, as its high bank is on the outside, could not have been built for defence. Just why a complete village should grow up within this circle nobody knows, and your guess will be as good as any. The whole village, however, is built of these monoliths, chopped up, as was necessary, into convenient sizes for floors and walls, and now washed white or pink as the owner fancies. But many stones remain. If you'll leave your car again and walk, you can see quite a number of them in the bit of pasture land at one side of the village, lonely sentinels guarding a dead past, with the sheep and the cows eating the grass around them. And several are left along the roads to show that Sacred Ways led into this enclosure from the hills.

Why should the village grow up here? The houses are about the period of all those in such out of the way and untouched English villages, roughly fifteenth to eighteenth century. But there was a village here before that, for the church was begun in Saxon times. Probably the houses of that period tumbled down and were built up again, the same old stones being used over and over. These little villages go far back into the past, for most churches have at least a Norman origin, which means that a community big enough to need a church existed before the Conqueror.

But after all, the village, any village, grew because a few shepherds or farmers built near each other for protection or companionship; it mattered little to them, far out of the active world, whether Saxon or Norman or Plantagenet was king, the chances were they would be as miserable and poor one way as the other. Their real enemies were the wolves, who invaded the village street itself on cold winter nights, and a moat was a good protection against them. (There are still moated farms all over England and traces of moats around many old houses.) Perhaps these peasants saw some such protection in that huge ditch, useless against a human enemy of course, but making access to the village a little harder for a wolf. Perhaps the convenience of building material tempted them, perhaps they used the circle itself as a wall—for with a bit of wattle or brushwood between the stones, it could easily keep cattle or sheep from straying. Perhaps it was the flatness of the ground within the enclosure, perhaps—oh, you can go on speculating all afternoon, and amuse yourself greatly, whether you get anywhere near the truth or not.

Perhaps there is just something about a circle—from all times the circle has been charmed, you see. Did you ever hear of a charmed square or a charmed ellipse? However it happened, it was some time long after the Bronze Age men ceased gathering here, long enough so the great religious significance of the place ceased to have any mean-

ing, that the village took root and grew. And, curiously, it has always kept within its circle, cramming its houses together to keep them inside the ditch, and even leaving itself a bit of pasture land at one side, and an open space around the church.

You must go to Avebury. It isn't "queer" like Stonehenge; too much normal human life has gone on here; too many people have lived, and laughed, and wept but got over it, and laughed again, for that. Nor is it simply "quaint" like other villages of low-built, thatched-roof cottages. You will find many that are even prettier if you hunt for them. But none like Avebury! Avebury has—something. You'll feel it strongly. Whatever it is has no special name. It must be the magic or the charm of the circle. Then there is Waden hill to the south, traditional scene of the twelfth and last great battle of King Arthur, who was carried to Avalon to die. And there is Silbury.

Outside the ditch, in a flat field inhabited by cows and sheep and chickens, a peaceful and farm-like and everyday sort of field, there rises suddenly a tremendous tower of earth, a grass covered cone, called Silbury Hill. It isn't a hill, of course, though it is more than 130 feet high, obviously it has some connection with the curious religion that built the stone circle of Avebury. Barrows were built for burials; this may be a very special sort of barrow built for some very special persons.

Scientists who pick up the indestructible flint tools of those early workmen and read their lives

from them, date all this a couple of thousand years before Christ. Four thousand years before Christ Cheops built his huge pyramid, and for many centuries his successors imitated him. Cheops' pyramid was orientated to the rising sun at its solstice. The Stone Age Britons placed the Heel Stone so that priests at the altar looked over it into the rising sun on the year's longest day, the dolmens opened to the sunrise.

All that may mean nothing. Races of people who have no intercourse with each other go through exactly the same grades of development and do exactly the same things. It happens in different times and in different parts of the world, but it happens to them in almost exactly the same way. It is like a tide rising along a coast; it will reach its flood at the headland an hour sooner than further up the bay, but it is the same tide. At one period or another the world went through the age of stone implements, and then of bronze and of iron and into civilisation as we know it to-day. They reached a high period of culture in Egypt when men were struggling with rude flints on the hills of Britain. English explorers not so awfully long ago found our American Indians in what we call the New Stone and the Bronze Age, and building barrows for their dead too. In some Southern Pacific Islands they haven't got that far even to-day. But the same tide of gradual development breaks over them all. If you want a scientific label to attach to all this, it is called

diffusionism. That is, knowledge, like light rays, is diffused from a mysterious central source; unlike light, it travels at different speeds.

Well then, was it this slow process, this mysterious spreading of knowledge, that made the Bronze Age or Neolithic Britons erect a mound like a pyramid? Or did some word of Cheops' work come slowly along the ancient tracks of Europe, from the more civilised cities of the Mediterranean and the centre of culture in Egypt? Or was it by the Phœnicians? They came to Cornwall for tin, but having obtained what was then a most precious metal, boarded their ships and cleared out; they had no desire to make settlements among barbarians on a rather rainy island. Still, they may have stopped long enough to gossip, and a good story travels a long way. They knew of the pyramids and perhaps they talked about them. As for the Britons, they had done wonders dragging about and setting up gigantic stones, but they knew nothing about cutting them up and fitting them together with cement, so they couldn't build a pyramid. But they could work with earth, if not with stone. They could change the shape of a hill, if it suited them, as they did at Old Sarum, possibly at the Tor and certainly at many other places. Why shouldn't they build a hill, if it came to that? Which they did, as you can see outside Avebury.

We go on, to London if you wish, or back to Bath if you want to make that a centre for touring

Somerset and the neighbouring counties, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Dorset, Monmouth and others. But one of the joys of England is that nothing is too far to be reached; and of a small car, that you carry your pack with you and go where you will. So, having seen Bath and left the Roman Road anyway, why not cut straight across country to Gloucester, and from there back to Cirencester, which brings you at last to the Fosse Way going north?

What will tempt you to Gloucester? The drive is a delight, especially when you reach the hills. Of course there's the cathedral, which gives you the curious combination of Norman and Perpendicular, the beginning and the end of Gothic architecture, the two styles side by side and sometimes overlaid. There are the tombs of kings and other grand people, including the Conqueror's oldest son, real heir to the throne of England (granting that William himself should have had the throne in the beginning). There are the cloisters, the finest in England or anywhere else. There's a New Inn to stop at, "new" in 1450. Oh, and there's Doctor Foster, who went to Gloucester. But we suspect that Mother Goose sent him there merely because he rhymed with it so nicely, and therefore need pay no attention to the poor man's subsequent disgust with the place.

Very well then, we are already in Gloucester, not to stay long, but long enough to see the one thing Gloucester can show us better than any other

cathedral in England—Norman solidity and Perpendicular airiness in the closest contrast.

You will find it at once in the nave, for when you enter the south door you have on your right the most massive Norman columns you've yet seen, plain columns that look as though they could carry ten times the weight the masons gave them, and carry it forever. On them the round arches sit solidly and honestly, so solidly and heavily your eye stops with their curve. There is a triforium, but so small it seems inconsequential; not even the clerestory windows of a later period, which light the beautiful vaulted roof, give you a sense of height.

Turn left, and look at the two western bays of the nave (the bay is the space between two columns). This is Perpendicular; it took more than three centuries of aspiration and architectural achievement to produce these lines which rise straight and steady until they curve to form the vault over your head. There is no break, from floor to roof the eyes go steadily up—and up—into the topmost shadows of the vault.

On the right is the work of the Abbot Serlo, friend of the Conqueror, who designed the cathedral, and built it so well that his walls carry most of the later decoration. On the left, however, is what the Abbot Morwent had learned from the centuries between, that arches can point upwards, as in the Early English style, that decoration can be delicate, but too fancy and flowing, as in the

Decorated, that the straight unbroken line gives the greatest height. So he adopted the straight unbroken line.

I wonder if I can show you something in the vault which almost nobody else knows. Wherever the ribs of the vaulting meet or cross and there is a piece of carving, this is called a boss. Coats of arms, Biblical scenes, portraits of people connected with building the cathedral caricatures and mediæval jokes and puns decorate these bosses, as well as intricate designs of foliage and animals. Have you your field glasses? Then sit down with your back against the right-hand column as you enter the door of the nave. Look up into the vault over head, and beginning at the north wall, which is opposite you, search the bosses with your glasses. One of them is carved like a leaf—just an ordinary broad leaf. *But,* it is carved so the shadows give you a face as well, a perfect face, even an expressive face. Accident? Not a bit of it! The shadows in valleys accidentally make the Man in the Moon, but the shadows were carved on purpose here to make the Man in the Leaf.

This isn't unique. Cathedrals and churches are full of such subtle jests. You may find some such bit for yourself, and then ask every one connected with the place, and none of them will know of it. And that's a gorgeous feeling—sharing a joke with a mediæval stone carver, a joke which now only the two of you know. On the tower of one of the parish churches in Glastonbury is a griffon gar-

goyle, a humpy sort of creature when viewed profile, who clings head down to the tower with his hind feet, arches his back, and brings his forefeet and head in to the tower wall again. But look at him from down the street, the arched body is most of an abbot's mitre, and somehow the gargoyle's shoulders and head and feet, and a confusion of shadows in the carving, make a perfect and saintly face. Mr. Bond discovered this years ago—but I've not yet found any one who knows the Man in the Leaf.

This is one of the great wonders of old cathedrals. These stones were not carved by artists, at least, the Middle Ages would not have called them artists. They were only skilled workmen drawing skilled workmen's pay, which was a thing to be reckoned in pennies, not pounds. They carved with their stone in position, climbing up and down their rough wood scaffolds from the floor of the church to be sure of their effects, for shadows seen from below are different from those you see when you stand close. Stone was under their chisels, but their real medium was shadow and light. And those who are ultramodern to-day, who do the newest abstract and symbolic sculpture, reproducing a feeling, an emotion, rather than an object, have not yet learned to carve so the stone says one thing, but its shadows another.

Let's go on to the south transept, for here, they say, the Perpendicular style was born. Before the middle of the fourteenth century the Abbot Wyg-

more, wishing to bring his somewhat shabby and old fashioned church up to date, conceived the veiling of stone which covers up the Norman work of the walls. His lines are not quite Perpendicular, but you can see they soon will be. Another abbot carried on this brilliant idea in the choir, where you should go next. He pared down the Norman walls to a flat surface, grooved this and fitted on a delicate screening of real Perpendicular work, which is carried on up over a new clerestory to add twenty more feet in height to a vault so exquisitely made, so fragile, so light, that you can only think of old lace or cobwebs with dew on them or frost patterns upon glass. And to light the whole, to give full value to slender shafts and tracing and cusped canopies, the whole east wall was eliminated, the walls were even bent slightly, and the space filled in with glass. They say it is the largest window in the world! And most of it is filled with exquisite old glass.

Gloucester has the tombs of two kings, and of one who should have been a king, but was too weak and yielding. He is Robert Curthose—Robert, whose legs and whose hose were short, was the eldest son of the Conqueror. His father called him a proud and silly prodigal, his friends called him kind and lovable, his brothers cheated him of the throne and he died an old man, a captive in Cardiff Castle. But the wooden effigy in the chapel makes him a handsome youth in his Crusader's armour. The shields of arms in the panels

of the chest show you Alexander the Great, Edward the Confessor, Judas Maccabæus, David, Hector, Julius Cæsar and King Arthur, which is certainly what might be called a representative collection of men!

Not far off is the tomb of Edward the Second, he was the son of a great father, Edward the First, under whom the country prospered, and during whose reign the Decorated period of architecture flowered into all its beauty. The weak and silly son turned the affairs of state over to frivolous or greedy friends and was under the influence of first one and then another favourite. In despair, his neglected wife Isabella gathered up an army, swept into the kingdom as a harassed housewife might go into an untidy room to set it straight, in a burst of exasperation chasing out the lazy husband. Isabella put Edward in prison and set her son, the third Edward, on the throne.

And so completely did the kingdom share her exasperation that when Edward the Second was murdered (she seems to have carried her annoyance to the point of having it done), no one would receive his body. But the Abbot Thorley of Gloucester, then rebuilding the south aisle of the nave in the finest Decorated style, took in the mutilated royal body and gave it an honourable burial. And the third Edward built over it a magnificent canopied tomb, by way of making up for past dishonours to the dead, and had put on it an alabaster effigy, the weak, delicate and probably

idealised face being carved, they say, from a death mask.

Irony was carried a step further. Pilgrims began to come to the tomb, and the cathedral profited by its past generosity. They came in such numbers that by 1450 the New Inn was built to accommodate them.

Then, with the tomb of King Osric, who died as long ago as 729, we are done with royalty here, and may go to the cloisters, the most beautiful in all of England. These are Perpendicular, and almost perfect, and the fan vaulting of the roof is a joy. You can touch the Middle Ages most intimately here, for you can see the lavatory, or washing trough for the monks, and opposite, the manutergia, or cupboard for their towels. You can even see a recess where the bell hung that called them from their work to meals or to services. And scratched on the benches, they say by novices in those long ago days, diagrams for such modern sounding games as "Fox and Geese" and others.

There are an extraordinary number of churches in the city as well as the cathedral, so many that there was an old saying, "as sure as God's in Gloucester." But Oliver Cromwell disagreed, for in a moment of annoyance he said the place had "more churches than godliness." But they are worth seeing if you have time, and so are the old timbered houses all over the centre of the city. See all you have time for, and load yourself with picture post cards. A long time afterwards they

will bring up details you have forgotten. What if other tourists crowd round you, making a selection and elbow you at the counter later writing cheerfully, "Wish you were here" or other original remarks to friends at home? No genius yet has been great enough to be epigrammatic on a picture post card, and few have been even amusing. Buy cards for yourself, and buy them of detail work whenever you can. The cathedral shops are just beginning to specialise in photographs of such things as bosses and carved capitals, window tracery and flying buttresses, and of statues in niches, and the camera with a telescopic lens will bring to you details of places you can scarcely see, even with your field glasses.

But we must go on. The road to Circencester is a Roman Road, and when you reach its central square, you'll probably not want to leave. Why catalogue its delights? There is nothing more blissful than to walk its streets in a late summer twilight, when the pavements are empty and light comes faintly through the drawn curtains of the ancient houses. Its long centuries of peace will quiet you, and you will go back to your inn and sleep as you never could sleep in New York, or any wide-awake bustling town! The road from Cirencester to Leicester is the Fosse (or Foss) Way, but if you want to go to Lichfield, or wander about through the Midlands or the Black Country around Birmingham, turn at the village of High Cross, a little before you reach Leicester, and fol-

low the Watling Street northwest. It broke beyond Penkridge and one branch went on to Chester, and one turned southward and lost itself finally, somewhere in the Welsh Hills. We can go on to Wall, where there was once a large Roman British village called Letocetum, meaning a grey wood. From there it is only three miles to Lichfield.

Probably you'll not want to leave Lichfield, either, at least not until you've known it thoroughly, for besides its cathedral, it is the birthplace of Dr. Johnson and for a long time was the home of his friend David Garrick. All good Americans who go to Lichfield go to the museum which was his home, for most good Americans adore the doctor, though had he lived in our day, he would probably have said most clever and unkind things about us.

You'll go to the cathedral, of course, though it does not rank with Canterbury or Lincoln or York or the truly great. But you'll find nothing more graceful or delightful than the view of the three spires, "The Ladies of the Vale" as they are called, especially if you see them in the late afternoon from across the Minster Pool. You can decide here, too, whether you like a cathedral front screened or not. Lichfield is screened, but its statues are almost all modern, alas! Many were thrown down in the Civil War by Cromwell's men, who played even more havoc here than in most places, and many were destroyed in 1810 by the

order of an old dean who complained that he fancied they nodded to him as he entered or left the church!

We must not stop too long, for we are on our way to York and Lincoln. If I have taken you past Stratford on Avon it is because it resembles an American summer resort for more than half the year. This is not snobbishness, it is merely because tourist trade has made it a place of souvenirs and flamboyant post cards, charabancs and touring cars, a too well arranged system of buying tickets and being taken in hand by a guide, of fake Tudor houses rubbing shoulders with the real. The hotels do a thriving trade and visitors rush about with guidebooks; it is hard to buy seats for the performances of Shakespeare's plays at the Festival. You are conscious of having been grabbed into the mouth of a huge machine and bolted down. Birthplace, Ann Hathaway's Cottage, antique shops, insistent guides, the Church, the Bust, and the well-known doggerel verse on the slab over Shakespeare's body under the floor—you go through with the whole routine because you must. But I know no finer way of making a Shakespeare lover into a Baconian than to bring him here when the rush is on! There is no feeling of the poet here; you can think of him as a smug and prosperous wool merchant in a country town, but never as the creator of the speech about Queen Mab.

It is not Stratford's fault, and it is not ours.

Tourists *will* come, and when they come they must be catered to, whether it's tea they want, or souvenirs, or hired guides to tell them things. Alas, they hurry in and hurry away, so certain efficiency methods of handling them must be introduced. But somehow, Shakespeare is doubly dead as a result, and unless you belong to that queer type of sightseer whose imagination functions as it ought to on all proper occasions (but you don't belong!) Stratford will only make you rebellious. You will climb into your car and hurry away as fast as you can to the quieter spots of the earth.

However, we have not, on this trip, gone to Stratford—we are still in Lichfield. You can run along part of the Rycknield or Icknield Street from here going towards Derby. That's romantic, being a Roman Road, but it must not be confused with the prehistoric Icknield Way, which runs along the Berkshire Downs and the Chilterns, far to the south of us. Or you can go through the district called The Potteries, where the Five Towns are, and then, if you bear right slightly, you'll get into Derby (of course you know it's pronounced Darby) and into the Derbyshire Dales, and presently climb the Peak and go on down into Yorkshire. This is a strong and vigorous country, lacking the softness, the sweetness, the feminine grace, of the south. It lacks its mediæval charm too, but that you will more than make up when you first see the ancient, perfect, battlemented and walled city of York.

# Chapter Eight

## THE WALLED CITY

We have travelled to York to find a miracle and presently we shall have it in the illuminated colour that pours through the windows of St. Peter's. This is not ordinary colour, this is miraculous colour, it dazzles your eyes and makes your heart beat faster, it makes you excited and happy and religious all at the same time, it floods your body with its richness and it bathes your very soul with its radiance.

But as the ancients knew very well, no miracle should be approached without a certain amount of ceremony and preparation. So I hope that you reach York too late to go straight to the cathedral, that you must see the town first and that you see it very late on, preferably, a Saturday afternoon. For to live in York is to live in the Middle Ages, that happens when you pass under one of the bars, or gates, into the charmed circle of its falls. It does not much matter whether you have approached it from the noise and modernism of the Midlands, or from the lonely roads over the moors, whether you climb down the centuries from Manchester, say, or up them from the primitive Derbyshire

Dales; in the end you come to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. All the glory of that time, which took up great spaces for churches to save men's souls, and all its stupidity, which crowded their bodies into dirty and narrow streets, are within the walls. But the stupidities have been so toned down by time that we now call them quaint, and the glory is undimmed. So perhaps there are two miracles in York, instead of one.

Let us walk around the walls and look down into the city. Few things more exciting can happen, especially if you have the setting sun and the dusk and presently the yellow street lamps underneath you as you walk, and perhaps, with extra special luck, an early moon that takes over the heavens when the sun has barely set. There are two and a half miles of battlemented wall, and for long stretches of it you may meet no one at all. You can let loose your imagination, indeed, you can't keep it in leash, when the twilight settles in. A workman going across the city by this short cut passes—so have workmen from the time the walls were building. Or a clerk goes by with a case under his arm—but he might, in the twilight, be a hurrying courier. And when you have the wall to yourself, you can place a bowman in leather jacket at each gap in the parapet, cross bow ready and bolts handy, or a Roman soldier on each turret, eyes to the north to watch the Picts of Scotland.

For the Romans had walls here, and a great for-

tress; York, an ancient town in their day, was always a northern centre. Their camp was roughly where the cathedral is and a separate little town grew up under its protection just where the railway station stands. The Emperor Hadrian lived here in 120, planning the earth wall across the top of England to keep back the Picts, the Emperor Severus died here, having rebuilt Hadrian's wall in stone, less than a century later. They say his body was burned on Severus Hill near the city. They say, but without proof, that the Emperor Constantine the Great was born here—he was, however, inaugurated here, so what with this Emperor and that, and legions marching north to take charge of the Wall, and detachments going back to Rome, and generals and centurions, York must have been a busy place. And not entirely Pagan, either, for it sent a Christian bishop to the council of Arles in 314.

So the Romans walked these walls in the twilight, though nothing remains of their town, and of their walls, only a many-angled tower in the northwest, with a base of Roman stone and brick. When the Empire drew in her legions, the story of York was lost. England was fought over and conquered and divided into little kingdoms, and no one cares much for the names of the leaders. Only Arthur in the south fought and was victor and was vanquished, and became a legend. A little more than two centuries after the last Roman soldier looked north from some such wall as this we stand

on, a Northumbrian king named Edwin was baptised here to please his wife. And from that the story of York goes on without a break.

For a long time the city thrived and was proud of itself as a centre of culture. But two years after the Conqueror came, the men of the North rose against him, stormed the city and killed his Norman garrison. In revenge, he burnt the town to its last stick and stone and all the country around it as well, no doubt wiping out all traces of Roman town and fortress. But he built the walls around the new city, and his soldiers too walked where we are walking, and watched the moors for enemies.

The city grew again, the Norman cathedral replaced the Saxon one, as was always the way. There was never complete peace; defensive walls were needed and were rebuilt as we see them to-day somewhere in the fourteenth century. By that time, those who walked the walls saw the city very much as we see it now in the early dusk. Bootham Bar was there, and Micklegate Bar, where the heads of traitors were stuck up, Monk Bar, then called Goodramsgate, and Walmgate, made in the time of Edward the First. The cathedral was being rebuilt from its Norman style into the then new and much-admired Decorated, the city was probably just as crowded, its lanes and streets followed the same whimsical lines they do to-day. Indeed, if you walk the walls towards dusk, you'll see the city perfectly outlined as it

was then; cathedral and parish church towers over tiled roofs, and little boats at anchor in the river. You look down on ruins occasionally, of course, but no doubt there were ruins even then of earlier buildings, and gardens and flowers, and yellow lights through the windows, as now. The lingering northern twilight helps, it intensifies the orange and red of the roofs, and the green of the gardens and all the coloured mosaic of the flowers before they are lost in the silver and black of the night.

After dark you have the lighted streets, and if it's Saturday, a sort of gay marketing and a great deal of life and bustle and movement. Walk where you will, either side of the Ouse (and do call it Ooze or no one will know what you're talking about), but for preference keep near the cathedral, since here the oldest part of any town is to be found. But go along Petersgate with the vista of the cathedral front past its gabled houses, and go through The Shambles, which is the most lovely street anywhere in the world, if you happen to adore things that are old and jumbled and haphazard and completely illogical. In the ancient days, as you have found out elsewhere in England, as a house rose, story by story it projected out over the street. In The Shambles, by the time the peaks of the gables are reached, the houses nearly touch across the street, and look as though they were leaning their foreheads together.

Now all this is only a preparation. I want you

to walk the old streets until you are tired, to look at the Parish churches, at the black mass of the cathedral against the night sky, at the gabled houses above the yellow gleam of the street lights. I want you to feel the Middle Age, to go to bed and dream of it all the night. Here and there you have touched it, been a part of it for a time, but nowhere before on this trip have you lived in it completely for more than a few hours. Here you have seen the very things it looked at, if you chose your old streets carefully; you already have learned to love what it loved. Therefore you *can* become a part of it, if you understand only one thing more, that it was a simple and childlike period. It had the heart of a child (which perhaps you have too), the unquestioning faith of a child, it delighted in stories (as we all do), and above all it loved color.

Now go to the cathedral before the spell has been broken, for the miracle of colour is there.

You will find it at once, for when you enter, as you must, by the door in the south transept, you look straight across to the gigantic lancet window known as the Five Sisters, which takes up most of the north wall and dominates the transepts. This is glorious enough, but glorious chiefly because of the nobility of outline of the five great lancets, and because the group lights up some of the earliest and loveliest work in the church. You will recognise the Early English period by this time; these two arms were built just before the Dec-

orated style came in. The south transept, where you stand, was the first part to be rebuilt, and it was done on a magnificent scale which all later builders had to equal. When it was building, of course, the rest of the church was Norman, and shabby. Near by, in St. Michael's Chapel, is the tomb of its builder, Archbishop de Grey, who died in 1255 and was laid here in the midst of his work. His is one of the most beautiful monuments in the place, and near him is the most pathetic—the tomb of the archbishop who succeeded him, who died excommunicated and broken-hearted, who at his death "appealed from the Pope to the Supreme and incorruptible Judge."

You must walk over to the north transept, to look back at the Rose, the round window which was over your head when you entered. Incidentally, this north arm was built by an Italian named Romanus, a priest in Rome, who attached himself to York because it was a secular establishment, and he might marry a beautiful English woman he loved. He is supposed to have designed the Five Sisters and paid for the glass.

However, you are less interested now in periods of architecture than in windows, for the designing of windows, or, as the old architects called it, fenestration, is what you can study best in York. And in these transepts you can best see the beginnings of the distinguishing mark of Decorated architecture, the grouping of the Early English lancet windows together (as the Five Sisters are

grouped), the insertion of the Rose window in the wall above the lancets as in the south transept, and finally, the combination of rose and lancets into one window. This led to the bending of the stone mullions into the flowing lines of tracery which makes every window of this period a perfect and separate joy. Not that the placing of the Rose above the lancets was original with York or even England. It had been done in Chartres and other French cathedrals centuries before. It had the practical advantages of giving more light to the interior, and of lessening the weight of the masonry over the lancets. More than that, it was beautiful.

But the combination of the two kinds of windows into one, setting the lancets closer and closer together until the space between them became not wall but stone mullion, and the placing of them and the Rose under one pointed arch, was something entirely English. So far, England had lagged slightly behind France in building, which was natural as much of her inspiration and many of her actual builders came from the continent. But with the introduction of this flowing window tracery, English architects followed an independent line for more than half a century; indeed, this type of building was not taken up by the continent until the style was waning in England and the straight up and down Perpendicular was making its appearance.

Rickman dates Decorated roughly from 1307 to 1377. That same romantically minded Italian

Romanus, who built the north transept, laid the cornerstone of the nave just before 1300. Of course he didn't live to see it completed nor to see the new type of architecture really developed. But by the time the great west window was put in, the builders knew exactly what to do with their mullions, and this window, which shows you outlined in its glass the Heart of Yorkshire, is one of the most beautiful in all of England.

Walk down the nave and look at it. The lines of the dividing mullions go straight upwards, then at the spring of the arch they begin to curve and form the design. They look like the stems of a cluster of plants, which burst into flower in the curve of the arch, an illusion made easier because of the colours of the glass. Most of the windows of the first three quarters of the fourteenth century give you this illusion even when the design at the top is geometrical rather than flowing and naturalistic.

Keep your glasses handy and get yourself a small guidebook, which will tell you the best windows and point out the restorations. Though probably your own colour sense will tell you quickly enough which is the old and which the new, for recent glass has not the brilliancy nor the depth nor the purity of tone of that made by the mediæval glaziers.

Why? There are many reasons, and to know them we must go back to the very beginnings of stained glass, and follow briefly the romantic his-

tory of its making. There is no better place in all England than York, where so much of the finest remains.

The history of it is really a war between the glass maker and the glass painter. In the beginning (that is, in the beginning of stained glass windows in cathedrals, which is all we are concerned with now), the actual glass maker controlled the window, and the painter was called on only to fill in such details as faces, to do a little shading on garments, and for such comparatively unimportant work. Gradually, however, the painter began to control the whole window, more glass was painted and less was "stained," the character of the window changed and in the end we come to some of the atrocities which the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been putting up in churches.

Now, a window is not a picture and the glass maker never considered it as such, hence his constant war with the painter, who could only think in terms of perspective and details and naturalistic composition. You can hang a painted landscape in your room and thereby open out your wall, give yourself some of the feeling of being outdoors on the edge of that landscape. But a window is already an opening in a wall, and light comes *through* it, so the handling of shadows is difficult, and the sense of real perspective impossible to obtain. Besides, naturalistic composition is impossible when figures and minute parts of fig-

ures must be outlined by the lead which binds together the glass. Can you see how unfit it would be to put in the middle of your drawing room floor a great rug showing a scene between mountains, let us say, so that you would be constantly walking over true-to-life trees and waterfalls and the airy space between the hills? Your rug is a design, even though its designs may be symbolic. Well, the window is a design, it cannot open out into the world, it must be flat, it must be an embroidery, richly coloured and brilliantly illuminated, but a wall decoration. It may show tiny bits of landscape, but if so they are in odd corners, part of the decoration, a detail, never the whole thing, as in so many modern church windows.

The glaziers, of course, could not have made a huge more-natural-than-Nature landscape, and would not have done so anyway, being artists and feeling what they could not explain. Glass was not *glass,* to be made in big sheets and cut up into convenient sizes; glass was a jewel, made in small jewel-like pieces, of jewel-like brilliancy, and fitted together with a goldsmith's care. Jewels and colour and mosaics and vivid embroideries and cloisonné enamels had come out of the East, principally through the Crusades, and every cathedral worker seized upon every new and beautiful discovery to add to the glory of his church. In this case he adapted Oriental splendour to his windows.

Like any artist, he had to work within certain limitations, and being a real artist, he turned the

limitations to account—like the poet with his sonnet or the painter who makes Nature more lovely with canvas and pigments, or the musician working within certain laws of counterpoint and harmony. He had to accept the space left open in the walls for the window, and the fact that glass must be braced with iron bars set across from wall space to wall space, and the fact that all the details of his pattern or his picture were cut about by the thick black lines of the necessary leading. Also, light came *through* his picture, not upon it, which in itself made the problem quite different from a painter's.

He made his "pot metal" as he called it, glass melted up with the colour, glass that is pure colour all the way through. He set his pieces together against the light, or on white tables, thinking only in terms of colour, and design worked out by colour. He realised early that blue was the one great colour, that it dominated the window as the blue sky dominated the world, that blue was heaven itself. But blue alone would not do, blue had to be picked out by other colours, set off by reds, and by a certain amount of green, and that two or three kinds of red and of green were better than one, and that other colours had their values as well. He must have experimented a lot and broken up many combinations that did not quite please him before he and his fellow workers established certain laws that govern translucent picture making.

The first thing was colour, the second design, for

design gave a chance to set off one colour by another, and it probably made little difference to the glazier whether the design was a geometrical border or a coat of arms or the figure of Christ himself. If you do not believe this, study the early windows in cathedrals with your glasses, and see how cheerfully the old glaziers put an emerald green face on a yellow figure or made a horse bright blue, and generally ignored all laws of pictorial art; as long as they got certain colours side by side, or the proper amount of any one colour into any one part of the design.

The process was fairly simple. The colouring material, metallic oxide or whatever it was, went into the melting pot with the glass, the one exception being ruby glass, which, if thick enough to be practical, kept out the light. To avoid this and yet get their red, they made a "flashed" ruby by cementing a skin of ruby glass onto thick colourless glass. Otherwise the colour went solidly through, and as the glass was always of different thicknesses and as the colour itself was not evenly distributed, it shaded from dark to light in every single piece. Besides, there were air bubbles, and streakiness and cloudiness, because the glass was mechanically imperfect, all of which contributed to the perfection of its appearance. As time went by, minute particles were dissolved away by the weather, so that the surface was faintly pitted, lichen, cobwebs and dust crept into the pitted parts, and the whole effect, until it got *too* dirty,

became more beautiful as the years passed. Because of the unevenesses, the light was refracted in curious and more attractive ways. The old glazier may not have known anything about that, nor that time would mellow and make more lovely the work he held in his hand. He did know that his colours were good, and that the church was the more beautiful because the light was sifted through them. He, personally, had little use for the painter on glass. He would have been content with mosaic and design, setting his coloured bits between strips of lead, which bent to their shape, and to which he could solder the copper wires that fastened the leaded form to the iron "saddle bars," which in turn were set into the stonework of the church.

But the bishops wanted pictures everywhere, they wanted to keep always before the eyes of their children the stories of the Bible, and certain historical anecdotes which pointed a moral, as well as to save from complete forgetfulness the names of those who went before them and who built the church. So the glass painter was called in.

They were very clever as to how they used their lead bindings when they were dealing with such parts of a picture as a large face. The hair and the nimbus (or halo, if it were a sacred figure) would be outlined, the eyes, which were made more prominent this way, the beard, if it were a man, the edges of the figure and the main divisions of the drapery. Leads often had to go where

such thick black lines were illogical, but logic never was part of the glass maker's art. If he had to have a figure, he made his leads help bring it out as far as possible, but where he couldn't, he put them in and ignored them and hoped those who looked at his window would do the same. Already he had learned to ignore the saddle bars which cut his picture into strips, though in the beginning he had paid so much attention to them that he had kept his designs in medallions between them.

Well, the painter came in. At first he did the faces, and where shading on drapery was needed, he used a sort of brownish opaque stuff, not really paint, something which kept out the light and so gave the effect of a shadow. Presently he was painting more and more parts of the window, using of course not paint, but powdered coloured glass and certain oxides, all of which when "fired" fused with the glass. Often the whole glass was covered with colour first and the desired effects were gained by scratching or working off the colour where high lights were desired. And about the time the nave of York was beginning to be rebuilt, it was found that a solution of silver applied on colourless glass would, when fired, produce yellow (which is the only "staining" actually done on stained glass) or green on a certain blue, or, when "flashed" ruby or blue glass had been ground away in parts to show the white glass under the colour, yellow upon this abraded portion. You will see a

great deal of this yellow detail work in Decorated windows.

Presently, however, the glass painters discovered that they could use a translucent kind of enamel and apply their colour directly upon the clear glass, a cheaper, easier, much less troublesome method of making a "stained" glass window. This enamel was powdered coloured glass, of course, and some sort of gum, and it let them do detail work with the greatest ease. With that the art of the glazier almost disappeared. It was an unfortunate discovery. The colour had to be made so it melted at a much lower temperature than the glass it was worked on, otherwise it could not combine with it. However, as such material must contract and expand more easily than the glass itself, it has not stood the great changes in temperature it is subjected to each year, nor any other test of time, it flakes off, and leaves large clear spaces in the design.

This was early in the sixteenth century. From then stained glass steadily declined as a medium of art. You can see what it has been in recent times by studying some of the new windows which have been introduced into cathedrals, where colours are hard and crude and muddy and cold, designs without taste, or where some extremely naturalistic "picture" dominates an entire end of a church. Some glass workers say there never was a "secret" to the making of fine old glass, that we can, or could, do it as well to-day. But glass

rolled in correctly flat sheets will never change shade subtly as glass that is thick and thin in parts, mechanically mixed colour in the melted pot of glass will not give the streakiness that adds so to the charm of old glass, while the centuries that soften everything with their dirt and their cobwebs take a long time to pass.

Time may be the lost secret of glass making. Or the genius of the old glaziers may indeed have been an infinite capacity for taking pains. Or, they may have had the instinct for setting colours together so as to enhance their values. They could not set down rules, at least they did not, and we can only find out by minute study how they did it. For an entire window of even so divine a blue as those in the western front at Chartres would look gloomy and muddy if it had no relieving colours with it. We may even be trying too hard, relying on our superior chemical knowledge and our superior mechanical equipment. Certainly the flaws in the old glass helped make it beautiful, our eyes are pleased by irregularities; otherwise a machine-sawed plank would be a thing of perfect grace.

You will find examples of all the early periods of glass at York, and little guidebooks to give you detailed information. Whatever you must sacrifice in the way of sightseeing or architectural study will be more than made up by the glory of the old windows. To know the miracle of their colour, you should go away for a while and come

back to them, you should see them with the early morning sun on them, with the glare of a bright noonday when they dazzle and bring the tears to your eyes, in the twilight, when they smoulder like huge fires, on a dark and rainy day, when they give out an illumination of their own, as though they had saved some of the sunlight of brighter periods, to pour it down upon you on this dingy afternoon.

You may have known some of the possibilities of colour, that dull tones depress and bright ones cheer, that too much red makes one's head ache after a time, or makes one nervous or irritable (try living awhile in a Victorian red papered bedroom and find out!), that there is something about blue that other colours don't possess, and that green is always cool. But you will never know the real miracle of colour, pure colour, translucent, luminous, divine and uplifting colour, until you have seen it and felt it poured all about you from some fine old window. It is worth going to England just for that, it is more than worth going to York to find it out.

# Chapter Nine

## THE SWINEHERD'S CATHEDRAL

THE bishop had a sense of humour and a sense of drama and a shrewd sense of business, which is as much as one can expect of any man, even a bishop. He wanted to rebuild the cathedral of Lincoln, cracked and weakened by an earthquake the year before, to make it as magnificent as a cathedral on such a hilltop should be. He knew the best way to make his people love this as they should was to make them help. Besides, he needed a lot of money, so he told them of the beauty and grandeur of the building they were to have, as fine as the great churches in his homeland of France, and then he asked for their contributions. Some gave more than they could afford and many gave less, which is the way of to-day, but one, a swineherd, came with every farthing he had saved by his whole life's toil. We have no record of the amount; it could not have been much.

But no man, said the bishop, can give more than his all, and blessed the swineherd, and told everybody in Lincoln about him. And if you do not believe all this, look on the north pinnacle of the west front of Lincoln, for there you will see him, blowing his horn to call his herd and dressed

in a drapy, classic and impractical sort of a garment for a man whose business it is to tend pigs. And on the other pinnacle, to the south, is the bishop, St. Hugh himself, with staff and mitre and a most benevolent and satisfied expression on his face, and fingers uplifted in blessing. But whether he is blessing you or the swineherd is a matter to be settled among the three of you. One thing is certain, had the swineherd known he was to be a statue as large and important as that of St. Hugh himself, he would have felt more than compensated for dying penniless, those days being what they were.

All this you can see for yourself with your naked eyes and a lot better with your field glasses, and before you have left Lincoln you will feel, as the swineherd did, and three different kings of England as well, that St. Hugh was really a remarkable man. He was born in Avalon (in France, not our Avalon in Somersetshire), and became one of the monks of the Grande Chartreuse, who from ancient days had a great reputation for piety and made the most wonderful liqueur the world has ever known. Hugh's reputation reached the ears of Henry the Second in England, our Henry, who repented at Becket's tomb. He sent for Hugh, and eventually gave him the see of Lincoln.

Now, when Hugh came to Lincoln, there was a Norman cathedral, much of which you can see. Remigius had come over with the Conqueror. He had given him a ship and some armed men, re-

marking that some day when William had pretty much all of England in his hands, he might perhaps give him a bishopric or something of the sort. Which William did, and Remigius spread his cathedral out over this hilltop, where a great Roman town and a great Briton fortress had stood, remnants of which had to be cleared out of the way. The building lasted barely a century, and cracked with the earthquake, and when Hugh came in 1186 it was to begin a quite different sort of architecture.

Hugh was firm-minded, but also tactful, otherwise he would never have kept friends with Henry (which was more than poor Becket did, you remember), nor with the impetuous and imperial King Richard, and the very cunning John who came after him. Also, he was energetic. He managed to rebuild the choir, the two choir transepts, and part of the regular transepts as well before he died in 1200. He planned a new sort of arch too, pointed and not a bit like the Norman, perhaps the first pointed arch to be built in England. He was a hard worker, he even got out among the workmen and carried a hod himself. Or so they say. And he was kindly and broad-minded, so that even the Jews in Lincoln wept at his funeral—and that was a period when feelings between Jew and Christian were very bitter. Twenty years after all this the Pope added him to the extra blessed company of the saints.

Lincoln belongs to Hugh, perhaps because of his statue and his story, though he actually built but

a small part of the minster. You have been studying ecclesiastic architecture throughout England; in Lincoln you will find some of the best examples of every period and the transitions between them. For instance, as you stand before the west front you'll see the great portals are Norman, the screen of stonework which masks the entire front and extends far beyond it on both sides is Early English, while the curious figures set in panels here and there are supposed to be Saxon. The tops of the towers are Decorated and the long windows, inserted later, are Perpendicular. There were spires on these towers, which were removed a century or more ago, and a tremendous spire on the centre tower, the highest in the world. This was blown down in 1547, about the time that Henry the Eighth died, foe of all cathedrals.

You will like Hugh's choir, when you go into the cathedral, and the Angel choir to the east of it, built later to hold the golden shrine of St. Hugh and so named because of the angels carved in the spandrels of the triforium arches. Here, curiously placed in such a celestial atmosphere, is the Lincoln Imp, copied millions of times as a door knocker, and for sale, not only all over Lincoln, but in every gift shop in America. You can find him without your field glasses. The shafts which carry the vault of the roof end in cone-shaped beautifully carved corbels coming down between the arches. At the foot of the second corbel from the east, on the north side of the choir, you will see

the Imp, grinning cheerfully at you and thoroughly pleased with himself and his world-wide popularity.

There are other details to delight you—the tomb of Queen Eleanor, beloved wife of Edward the First. She died near Lincoln, and a portion of her body (but which portion I do not know) they say is buried here. The real tomb was destroyed by Cromwell's men, this is an imitation. She was carried in state to London, and wherever the body rested for the night, a cross was built by her lamenting husband. If you motor about enough, you will run into several by the roadside, for the procession went slowly. One is in the northern suburbs of London, and that at Charing Cross, in the railway station yard, is an imitation, with bits of the old one put in.

In Lincoln look for beautiful details. Outside on the south side of the church is one of the most charming mediæval statues of a queen, tucked away in a corner, half hidden behind a parapet. She isn't Eleanor, but she might well be; in Lincoln they call her Queen Margaret or Marguerite. She has a grave and sweet and lovely face, and the gesture with which she gathers up her robe has all the dignity of any queen. She's one of the details, one of the many unmentioned details, of Lincoln. It would take you months of time, and long scrutiny with your field glasses, to discover half of the wealth of beauty the old builders put here just for you.

In the cloisters is a stone slab inscribed with the name of Richard Gainsborough, who died in 1300 and worked on the Eleanor Crosses. And there too is the old figure of the swineherd, a modern copy of which you have seen on the west front pinnacle. And in the cloisters is your last lesson in architecture, unless of course you make a tour of Wren's churches in London. The north side either fell down or was burnt or was pulled down, and was replaced by a building in the style that followed the Gothic in England. Architects went back to Rome once more for their inspiration, but they turned out something so different from the Norman work that you will recognise a common source only in the rounded arch. In Lincoln they were wise enough not to imitate the work that was ruined; they built in the best way they knew at the time. They say Wren had a hand in this. So the cathedral gives everything from crude and probably Saxon figures on the front, to the exquisite, almost dandified, architecture of England under the Stuarts, in the cloister library.

All Lincoln is not bound up in the cathedral, though here, as in all such cities, the best work and the finest brains and most of the wealth, went into the great church. But before you leave (and don't hurry away, please!) I hope you can see one thing. Recently, the sturdy fabric showed signs of the centuries that have passed over it. Occasionally even the old builders economised on their work, though nowadays if we built for nine hun-

dred years we would think we had achieved a miracle. The walls were weakening. Money was raised, a great deal from America, by the way, builders were called in, and Lincoln began restoration work. Not in the crude way of the past century, when restorers did as much damage as Henry the Eighth or Cromwell, but intelligently and with appreciation. Where the rough rubble work is weak inside the thick stone casing of the walls, where cement has crumbled from between the stones, the builders are now at work. They thrust long steel bars between the stones, I have seen them sink deep, several feet, into the thick skin of the church. Hollow pipes are put in here, and concrete forced through. And when they are done, Lincoln will be welded together by concrete, solidifying the inside rubble, binding the weakening stones together, making the cathedral from west front to eastern end of the angel choir one solid block of stone. But not once will the cement show; its strength is behind and inside and beneath the walls. Lincoln will stand as perfect as it is to-day, lovelier perhaps, for the pilgrims who come after us centuries and centuries from now.

Let us go into the town. I hope, by the way, that you have approached it as I did the first time, from the North, speeding along the straight Roman Road, the Ermine Way, which you will find, coming down from York, on the south side of the Humber. Miles and miles away, with the straight silver line of the road unrolling before you, and the

double line of ancient trees on either side, you can see the cathedral towers. At first it is a little vignette framed in green, very tiny, exquisite, not quite clear. Speed your engine, the road slopes slightly, there is little traffic, and it is a gorgeous place to test the limit of your car. Cæsar's or Hadrian's legions made no such speed as this! The towers will grow larger and become clearer, the road is straight and tightly drawn, and cool even on hot days. There was a Roman town where Lincoln begins, but of course there is nothing to see. There are ruins in a field near by. But you'll not stop, for there are the towers in the oval green framework of the trees. As you rush on, the picture grows larger and larger and more beautiful until you drive straight into it through its green frame.

You go through a city gate which is round and which the Britannica claims is one of the most perfect specimens of Roman architecture in England, and you are in Lincoln. To be precise, you are in Lincoln "above hill," meaning you are on the cliff. There's a bobby who controls traffic, an anachronism surely if this is a Roman arch, but a pleasant and smiling and, I remember, a rather good-looking anachronism. So, passing over the buried remnants of a Briton town and a Roman city, you draw up at last before the cathedral. Or perhaps before an inn for tea.

Do not despise tea! It isn't a drink, it's a ceremony, an untying of all the nervous knots of the

day, which goes more smoothly thereafter, an excuse to rest half an hour because you'll do better work afterwards, a chance to gossip, a national and sacred custom. If you belong to the various "upper" classes, you have China tea, and the bread and butter is thin. If you are one of the "lower classes" the tea is India, and very black and strong, and there is more bread and less butter, or perhaps margerine instead. The grocer makes a neat distinction when he sells you "drawing room" or "kitchen" tea, though if you are old-fashioned in tastes, you may serve India tea in your drawing room. In that case you'll have antimacassars and lots of lace curtains, an out-of-date dog like a pug or a poodle, and dozens and dozens of kinds of cakes. You can "date" your new acquaintances or discover their social class at once by the sort of tea and the number of different kinds of cake they serve! And the best part of it all is that the mistress in the drawing room dislikes India tea as bitter, while the cook in the kitchen refers to the delicate China grades as pale slops!

But beginning about four in the afternoon life slows down in England. It is tea time! Restaurants fill up, typists in offices boil kettles over gas flames, taxi men desert their cabs, the streets are much, much quieter, down every area way you'll see a group of maids in fresh caps and aprons drawn up around a table with cups and a large tea pot. No matter how far into the country you go, you can always get it. Some little cottage will

present a sign saying "Teas" just about halfway through your afternoon.

And these, by the way, are the nicest teas of all, far nicer than tea in a smart restaurant with an expensive dance orchestra playing. I've had tea in front of a cottage on the Pilgrim's Way, with the whole world tumbling below into the Medway, and a sociable chicken who sat across the table and clucked for crumbs, and tea under blossoming apple trees, with the austere South Downs like a wall above, hot tea and scones (scuns they call them) in the bleakest part of Salisbury Plain, with barrows and ghosts all about, tea with the rabbits that live in a deserted Roman camp. If you want to learn how nice England and the English really are, draw up at some little out of the way thatched cottage with a modest and meek-looking sign, and ask for tea. After three days you'll be thirsty for it about four to five in the afternoon, and if you wonder why that is, blame it on the climate. As tea, the drink may be bad, but there is always bread and butter and piles of strawberry jam, which you've loved from your childhood and probably thought undignified to indulge in when you grew up. If you are rather quiet and take on an humble and inquiring manner, you can get a lot of local misinformation and a lot of amusing gossip from your hostess.

However, this gets us no further into Lincoln than an inn. You might as well put up your car, for Lincoln "above hill" and Lincoln "below hill"

must be explored on foot. Indeed, cars aren't allowed in some of the streets; if they were, they'd slide off onto the roofs of the lower city. You'll adore the names—Steephill, which is certainly appropriate, Bail Gate, the mediæval Exchequer Gate, Pottergate, and Stonebow in the High, which carries the Guild Hall above it. St. Dunstan's Lock is the name given the entrance of a street where the Jewish Quarter once was. There's a church called St. Mary-le-Wigford and another, St. Peter-at-Gowts, "gowts" being sluice gates, and St. Peter's-at-Arches. Then there's the High Bridge, which takes the High Street over the river Witham and carries still some of its mediæval houses on it—reminding one of the London Bridge which was falling down and was pulled down last century.

Some of the streets simply become stairways up the cliff, but some curve around to avoid too heavy a grade, so you can take your car from above hill to below. But you must walk to the quaintest shops and the oldest houses, which are very old indeed in Lincoln, for there are Norman remains in Deloraine Court and the House of Aaron the Jew. There was a wealthy Jewish colony here once, Aaron being one of the most important financiers in England about 1166. The "Jew's House," which is twelfth-century, and one of the oldest small houses in all England, is curiously cut up with shop fronts and new square windows tucked

under its round stone arches, but most delightful and quaint just the same.

If you want to learn something of the way people lived in mediæval times you can probably do so better by studying the old houses than the great castles and the churches. Life could not have been so uncomfortable, assuming, of course, that one was rich enough to live in a house at all, and not in a structure of "wattle and dab," as they called the early huts that sheltered family and cattle under one sociable roof. There were always big fireplaces; if one slept on straw, there are worse beds than that! and we have thousands and thousands of farm houses where the daily conveniences of life are as lacking as they were here in the old days. As for the moderately well-to-do, they had beds and bed linen, tables were wide boards laid over trestles, there were chests and benches if not chairs, and tapestries and handings to cover drafty doorways to or warm or brighten a cold stone wall. They packed themselves tightly into their towns, the families were large, there were plenty of servants, retainers, or apprentices, and domestic life seems to have been fairly comfortable and sociable.

They must have been busy—the records of the guilds tell us that, as well as the actual amount of building and carving, glass making, iron work and so on done on the cathedrals and churches. They weren't unhappy—the gargoyles grin at you, the faces worked in among the foliage ornaments of the churches smile at you, the sad face is made so

TWO SIDES OF THE OLD TRIANGLE BRIDGE AT CROWLAND WHICH WENT THREE WAYS TO CROSS THE JUNCTION OF TWO STREAMS.

A SAXON CONCEPTION OF THE EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN, A BIT OF MEDIEVAL GROTESQUE ON THE WEST FRONT OF LINCOLN CATHEDRAL.

full of woe it becomes ridiculous. The wood carvers and stone carvers liked their jokes; you can see that in every city. Biblical figures, kings and occasionally bishops are treated with respectful seriousness and the dead with reverence in all the work on his tomb. But whenever possible the old time workers laughed.

When you leave Lincoln, it is to run south through a district called the Fens towards Peterborough, a district so different from anything else in England that it might be another country. You take the Roman Road again, the Ermine Street, but your motor road does not follow it exactly. Sometimes following the curve of the metalled roadway you run on, you can see faintly the straighter line of the original street cutting across fields towards another curve ahead. Probably at some time a puddle formed in the old way, and wagons or horses turned aside to avoid it. Or a tree fell across the road, and a turning out was made for this, or a village grew up a little distance away, and the new road twisted towards it. A thousand accidents deflected the straight course; left to itself, a road always curves, perhaps seeking the easier level, as a stream of water finds a constantly lowering grade. It was only the Roman engineers who drew the line taut, and never cared whether they climbed hills or went down into marshes, so long as they could see before and behind them for enemies, and could reduce their mileage.

There is a great deal more than half a million

acres of fenland, west and south of The Wash. Once it was all a bay of the North Sea, but it has silted up and now only The Wash remains. How long ago the silting up began is more than I can tell you; tradition says the Britons more than two thousand years ago built dykes and dug ditches to dry out portions of their very wet country. The Romans dug catch-water drains, to use a fenland term, they built the great Car Dyke, from Lincoln south, as far, they say, as Cambridge, as well as earth walls against the sea and the Welland River, of which more than one hundred and fifty miles remain. They were clever and able men, they "cleaned up" and civilised a country when they took charge of it, and it would be interesting to speculate what they would have done to England, had they possessed it more than a brief four hundred years.

When they left to protect their besieged Rome, the fenland went back to the boggy wilderness it was before they came. But here and there were islands of firm ground, and on nearly every one of these, isolated by water and mud, uncomfortable, cut off from the world, monasteries and churches and even civilised villages grew up. Ely and Peterborough and Crowland, where we are going next, are only three from dozens such monastic communities.

Crowland is one of the little lost corners where almost nobody goes because almost nobody knows about it. Also, it's hard to get to, but the way

is most amusing. You must pick out the small roads, and the best way is to follow the main London Road, wavering back and forth over the Ermine Street, until you come to Market Deeping, (One of the oldest houses in England is here, by the way), then turn left in the centre of the village. You'll think for a time that you have wandered off into Holland as soon as you see cottages and a windmill and a canal grouped together. And this part of the county *is* called Holland, and once the whole fenland was drained by windmills, though steam pumps are replacing them.

If you've any doubt as to the road to Crowland or Croyland, it is called both, buy an Ordnance Map. I missed the usual road, and found a way along the top of a great dyke, twenty or more feet above the water, a great wall of earth with a track exactly the width of the car's wheels. There was no turning off for miles; down a steep bank on one side was the water and down an equally steep bank on the other a meadow with cows, and grass growing up to their middles. Fortunately, we met no other car; if so one of us would have had to back for a mile or so.

However, it was the nicest way to approach the once important and active, but now slumbering and forgotten, Crowland. It was one of the well-known islands in the Fens as far back as the year 700 at least, for King Aethelbald founded a monastery here in 716 in honour of St. Guthlac of Mercia, a nobleman who became a hermit and

retired here and incidentally foretold Aethelbald's accession to the throne. The hermit's cell is supposed to have been near by on Anchor Church Hill, "anchor" in this case meaning anchorite and having nothing to do with ships. But his abbey and the one following it were burnt, and the present one, which we are to see, was started about 1113.

It seems appropriate that most of it should be in ruins, for Crowland belongs as completely to the past as Glastonbury. The houses are ancient, the streets wide and quiet, and nobody seems to be about. In the centre of the village is one of the oldest and most curious stone bridges in the country, a triangular-shaped bridge worth going many miles to see. Once it spanned the place where two streams came together and it led you down either side of them both, that is, it went three ways. But as these have been run under ground, it stands here high and dry and looking most forlorn, an aged man with nothing to do but sit in the sun.

Apparently this was built in the fourteenth century, for the three arches that join in the centre are pointed, and the stone work is certainly that old, and so is the carved figure set in the wall by one of the flights of steps. Perhaps older! A bridge of the sort was referred to in a ninth-century charter, but it must have been rebuilt. There are bridges in Dartmoor said to be two thousand years old, but these are slabs of stone set on piers.

Crowland bridge is another example of how a mediæval builder turned necessity into beauty, taking the three paths that crossed the streams and tying them together in this exquisite manner.

The abbey is only a little way along the street. You'll recognise some of the original Norman work in the ruined arches. The nave has become a cemetery, the dead sleep among the ruins, and many lovely carved stones must be buried under the grass with them. The ruined west front shows some exquisite carving still, for Crowland was rich until Henry the Eighth dissolved and sacked the monasteries. Then, as the life of the town depended on the monks, the abbey fell into ruins and the village settled slowly into the sleepy state we see it now. The north aisle of the abbey nave has been restored and is used as a parish church. Crowland is like its bridge, ancient, and past its usefulness, but so exquisite, so different from anything you have seen or are likely to see again, that you should go there. But don't go unless you like old gentlemen who sit and doze in the sun—otherwise it will be just another inconveniently located ruin.

You are well into the Fens here, and will be until you have crossed the Great Ouse below Ely. But you'll not know the Fen country if you stay around the large towns. Choose one, Peterborough or Ely, perhaps, as centre, and if you have the time, spend several days motoring about here. Or hire a horse and ride! It's extraordinarily quiet coun-

try, fat and farmlike. The crops are thicker than elsewhere, that's because the soil is new and rich. It's not exciting, like mountain country, nor even pleasantly emotional like the Garden of England in the South, with its softly rounded hills and curiously shaped downs. It's flat and it's beautifully green, continually crisscrossed with ditches and rivers and dotted here and there with windmills or with a cluster of brick houses under a huge tree. It's monotonous, but the monotony is soothing, like hearing knitting needles. And it should produce a race of men and women as placid as itself.

It didn't. From all times the Fen people have been proud, fierce, loving liberty above everything (Did the settlers of our Boston come from Boston in the Fens?). The British tribes were the Iceni, and their queen was Boadicea. Her husband was a prince under the early Roman rule, and when he died (61 A.D.) without a male heir, he thought to conciliate Nero by dividing his fortune between that ruler and his own two daughters. Otherwise the lands of the Iceni would be annexed.

Nero was never conciliated by a third share of anything, which the Briton prince might have known. Boadicea was scourged and the daughters violated. She rose in revolt against the Roman, all southeast Britain with her. The governor Paulinus was in North Wales with his troops. She rose out of the Fens and went down the Ermine Way towards London; tradition pictures her in a

horse-drawn chariot rather like the Roman ones, but with unpleasant-looking double-edged knives sticking out of the axles. Her outraged daughters were at her feet; she was the Avenging Mother of all times. Paulinus rushed back from Wales, but was helpless without his army (you could do his journey in a day with your motor car). The Britons burnt the Roman Verulam, now St. Albans, some of London, Colchester in East Anglia, and nearly annihilated the Ninth Legion, marching down the Ermine Way, our road, from Lincoln. At last Paulinus got his men together and met the Britons, and in the terrific battle which followed of course he conquered. Boadicea took poison, and her army was hunted down and butchered, and they say the scarcity of Roman-British remains around the fenland is due to the terrible way the Iceni were punished. After which Rome became more lenient, and Britain became quiet.

But the Fen people remained unconquerable. They were at home in their swamps, they got about with stilts, or boats, or they waded, and they could go where no outsider could follow. Hereward "the Wake" the Saxon who defied the Conqueror and stormed Peterborough and Ely, came from the Fens and escaped into them. The Fen people were in the Peasant's Rising of 1381, against a tax of a shilling a head for every adult, when many of them called for the prompt abolition of all differences in rank and of property. They were in the Pilgrimage of Grace (which travelled over our

road, from York down), but in a way this was a reactionary rising, since it was against Henry the Eighth for dissolving the monasteries, but for the church. Oliver Cromwell came out of the Fen country, and on down through history until recently, the Fen people revolted and fought every one who came in to drain their lands and enclose them.

For they made their living easily from the richness of their marshy land. An old writer lists these—"wild duck and geese, pilchards, shovellers, teals, widgeons, garganies, peewits, coots, terns, grebes, water-hens, redshanks, godwits, lapwings, cranes, bitterns, whimbrels, reeves, ruffs, herons and swans"—as being part of the wild fowl to be caught easily in the Fens. They were sent to the London market. And from the rivers and pools came "pike, perch, bream, dace, rud, roach, tench, sticklebacks," and that one great delicacy of the Middle Ages, eels. When Nature gave him food and an easy source of making money like this, no wonder the fen man hated to see the commonly owned marshlands drained into fields that needed laborious tilling!

There were tame geese too, easily reared in this country. Towards Michaelmas, when of course every one eats goose because every one always has, the roads to London were white and unpassable for the flocks being driven in to be sold.

If you'd like to see such a sight, drive towards any market town on market day, and you'll meet

flocks of geese and the goose girl, flocks of sheep and their shepherds, just as in the Middle Ages, and, as they have the right of way and you haven't, you'll either stop your car or wait patiently if you go the way of the flock, for a chance to creep around it. If there's any annoyance, it's you who beg pardon, though you may be missing a train! That's the custom and the courtesy and the unwritten law of the road, which still does not recognise motors as anything but upstart travellers.

# Chapter Ten

## ISLANDS OF FAITH IN THE FENS

THERE ARE three important towns on your way back from Crowland, or Croyland, to London—the "Golden Borough" of Peterborough, Ely on its hill in the midst of the fenland, and the university town of Cambridge. It is only about eight miles down to Peterborough, on a straight road more or less high and dry above the marshes. From all times this way was the communication between the two important religious centres. There were always roads through the Fens, though not many; in the old days the Fen people travelled by stilts, boats and quite simply by wading when their way lay off the road.

Peterborough on a Saturday afternoon or evening is so crowded you'll not be able to take your car around with any sort of comfort, but then you'll prefer to walk. Every one in the town is out on the streets, and almost every one from the manufacturing villages around. And there is a lovely jumble of ancient and new houses and a great deal of nice old brickwork; brick was either made nearby or brought cheaply from Holland, all this part of the world is built of brick. The inns are old, and specialise in such names as "The

Swan" and "The Angel," with delightful old signs swinging over the narrow street.

Running through the centre of each inn is the carriage entrance to the courtyard or stable yard, by which you may know that the house was built in the coaching days so that passengers could alight here on the dry brick pavement, out of rain or mud and convenient to the tap room. The floors of the bedrooms are usually made of broad planks of pine or oak, fourteen or more inches wide, and rubbed glossy with centuries of feet and of chambermaids' mops. If you're very lucky, you may find a bedroom whose floor sags like a hammock, so you climb a grade from the centre to the windows or the door and the beds tilt in a rakish and drunken fashion. After so much journeying in England, you'll be in the state of mind where you prefer such a room to one with a dull level floor and a private bath, and windows that open without preliminary coaxing.

These old coaching houses have charm, even when they are not gorgeously picturesque like the "George" at Salisbury or the "Pilgrim's Inn" at Glaston, the "Mermaid" at Rye or the "New Inn" at Gloucester, to name four out of dozens that books have been written about. No one ever said that a modern hotel had "charm"—no one but its advertisement writer! Charm is the will to be pleasant and the leisure to be thoughtful, especially in the casual contact of innkeepers and guests; it is not in professional good will, nor the

"business-paying courtesy" of the efficiently run hotel.

However, let us put up our car in the big stall where eighteenth or seventeenth century horses rested from their gallops between coaching stations, and walk through the crowd that fills the pavement and streets to the cathedral Close. Peterborough is ancient, even for an English cathedral, for practically all of it is Norman.

The gate house which you go under when you leave the market place and turn into the Close, is incredibly old, and will impress you even though you have seen so much that is ancient. It was built by a friend of the murdered Becket, Benedict, who had been prior at Canterbury and came here to be abbot (Peterborough had not then been raised to the ecclesiatic rank of a cathedral). He brought with him the very flag stones on which the murder of Becket had been committed, which had been stained with the sainted man's blood, and placed the precious objects in a chapel he built north of the gate, which he called Becket's Chapel. But whether miracles happened here near the stones, such as happened every day at Canterbury near the body, is more than I could ever find out. Part of the chapel is a museum to-day.

You will probably decide once and for all when you see Peterborough, whether or not you like a screen front to a cathedral. Many writers say this west front is one of the great glories of architecture, ranking with the best on the Continent and

outranking even such a front as Wells. However, it has nothing at all to do with the cathedral it masks, it does not even provide a plain surface for the display of statues and carved Biblical stories, so perhaps is not properly a screen. It is a huge vaulted porch with three great arches showing the original face of the building behind them, and flanked on the sides by small towers. Above are three gables, one over each arch, and in these there are niches and statues, but they are so far up that you'll have trouble making them out even with your field glasses.

This is Early English period, and was probably finished before Wells or Salisbury had built their screen fronts. The recessing of the three huge arches (they are about eighty feet high) gives a curious contrast of deep shadow and strong highlights to the front of the building, and the multitude of slender shafts which make up the arches catch the light and break it up into long silver splinters, bright in front where the light is strongest, but glowing almost more brilliantly towards the inside of the recess, where they shine against the deep shadows. But whether this is contrast of light and shadow, or the luminous quality some stone seems to possess, is a problem for you to solve while you study the great screen.

To many people its trouble is that it not only enlarges the actual face of the building, but that its vast arches lead one to expect something quite tremendous behind it. Indeed, it looks as though

it might be the lower story to some never completed mediæval skyscraper of stone, but that, perhaps, is our American imagination, used to every form of architecture being distorted and bloated to trim parts of our big buildings. The slender and very elegantly shaped pinnacles and spires may seem like a frill of lace paper work above the hugeness and solidity of the three arches,—but again we may be wrong in feeling so. The old builders, almost all the time, knew what they were doing artistically.

In any case it is interesting to find some such radical difference in a cathedral, whether or not you quarrel with the abbot who planned it. When you go through the Decorated Porch, which was built in the centre recess to strengthen it when the walls weakened, you go straight back into the Norman period, late Norman, when the need for height was keenly felt, and when they were finding that, tall as they made their walls, they could not get the height their eyes demanded. Keep the height of the nave in your mind's eye; actually, it is eight feet higher than the nave of Ely and looks lower.

You can almost hear the Abbot Benedict thinking it out and talking to himself, some fine hot mediæval summer day, when his workmen covered the scaffolding and the air rang with the musical sound of their chisels against the stones. "I have made my main piers as high as I dare, if they went higher, in spite of the generous

mouldings around them, the effect would be skinny and ugly. My triforium is taller than any I know of, and if my clerestory were larger, it would be all out of proportion and seem to crush down my piers. I can get a little more height by vaulting the wooden roof, and the painting on it will make it rather gorgeous so people will look up when they come in, as they should. Will they feel the height when their eyes are carried up to the bright colours I shall put all over the roof? Or shall I use this new pointed arch throughout?"

He knew all about the pointed arch, of course, for the saintly old man did not die until 1193. His successor, who built the west transept used them to connect with the main part of the nave. You can, by the way, see the development of detail carving in this, which architects label "Norman Transitional" for the "dog tooth" ornament so beloved in Early English times is differently done here, and even looks a little like Norman "chevron" work.

Choir and north and south transepts are Norman and very much alike, so perhaps Benedict kept to the round arch because he wanted unity of style in his church. There are Saxon tombstones in the north transept, discovered under the present pavement, and in the south, stairs leading down to the old Saxon cathedral, where the defiant Hereword spent his hours of vigil and prayer before being knighted. The choir is the oldest part, as all building began at the east. The nave

ceiling is original, the old designs have simply been painted over just as they were when Benedict looked at them seven hundred and some odd years ago. The choir ends in an apse, and in one of the centre windows there are fragments of glass showing the life of St. Peter.

In the beginning Peterborough was called Medehamstede, and the first church was built in 654 by Peada, the son of the pagan king of the Fen people. The brother Wulphere, who succeeded him, renounced Christianity so violently that he killed his own two sons for adhering to it. But later, repenting as violently as he had sinned, he completed the first church in great style and dedicated it to St. Peter, who also had sinned and repented, and to whom therefore he might look with a little hope of intercession when his soul came up for judgment. But what sort of reception Wulphere met from his murdered sons and how much St. Peter was moved by the naming of a church after him are other matters; all we know is that in time Medehamstede became Peter's town or borough.

Two unhappy queens were buried here, both by one sexton. A blue marble slab covers what was once the grave of Mary Queen of Scots, beheaded eleven miles away at Fotheringay. Less than a year after her execution the body was carried here by Elizabeth's orders and interred, with a great torchlight procession, lords and ladies walking the whole distance, and the populace crowding after

the state coach with the bier, and probably most of the women weeping, as they do now, even at strange funerals. She did not rest here long, poor queen, for when her son became James 1st of England, he wrote a letter to the cathedral, which you can see framed over the slab (it is very crooked writing, too), ordering the body sent to Westminster. And there you can see her final resting place when you get to London.

The modern tablet was put up by a subscription from all the Marys of England. All the Catherines from not only England but many parts of the world contributed to the tablet lately put up to the memory of the other unhappy queen, Catherine of Aragon, first wife of Henry the Eighth, who died a lonely death in Kimbolton Castle, thirty miles away. They say Henry ordered a very stately funeral "for his sister-in-law, the Princess Catherine," being busy about then justifying his marriage with Anne Boleyn. They also say that the tapers around the tomb kindled themselves afresh at the news of the beheading of Anne, a sort of flicker of triumph on their part perhaps, for one cannot think that the soul of Catherine had anything to do with it, not at least if one judges her character from Shakespeare. As for her tomb, Cromwell's men added that to their loot, too.

Perhaps the greatest joy of Peterborough is the remnant of the cloister and the green, green grass that grows in the centre, in what was the garth.

From here you can see the whole south side of the nave, and notice how different it looks, because the windows, which you cannot see from within on account of the thick walls and Norman arcading, were rebuilt in the Perpendicular style. Walk across to the southeast and go through the delightful arch into the Little Cloister, an ancient passageway whose walls are pure poetry. Then turn left. The old Infirmary, as the hospital was then called, stood here, and when it became a ruin, some of its arches remained. But whether it was to save the time of pulling them down, or whether the idea of a ruined Gothic arch being part of a new house amused the builders, I do not know. All I know is that here and at Ely you will see these ancient arches built into the walls of the houses that cluster near the cathedral.

Delightful as the Little Cloister is, we cannot linger too long. I hope you spend the night here, though, just to walk through the Close and around the cloisters and along this passage at night. There were some flowers once that grew over the wall from a garden and looked like blue fire in the moonlight. The yellow lamplight of the passageway mingled with the silver of the moon and the walls were many colours, while the cathedral was black and polished steel against the night sky. If you never expect to go to Peterborough again, let this be your last sight of it—for certain things that man has done, make even God's moonlight more wonderful.

There's a winding road to Ely over the Fens, or there's the London Road, which still is more or less the Ermine Way. But the winding roads are always the nicest, and the motoring map will show you how to get there, bearing left as you start south, and going out of the unpicturesque part of the fenlands where they make brick into the quiet meadow and farmlands, with windmills and clear rivers and the eternal crisscross of the draining ditches. You are getting much too near London not to feel it, the sense of being in old and forgotten country has gone. But just the same the tiny villages are extraordinarily pretty, and when at last you see Ely rising on its island out of the flat green fenland, with its one great western tower and its magnificent Octagon, you'll be glad you chose the winding roads.

The cathedral at Ely was named for St. Etheldreda and St. Peter, but whether this Saxon queen takes precedence over the apostle because she was a lady or because she gave the money for founding the church is a matter for antiquaries and historians to decide. She had inherited the Isle from a first husband and they say left the second one she didn't like to retire here and found a religious house, all this being about the year 670 or so.

This church of Etheldreda's (she was made a saint, of course) was often patched up, but in spite of the invasion of the Danes, who destroyed most everything else, it stood until fifteen years after the Conqueror. Then a Norman abbot was

sent to take charge, an old man of eighty-six, who in spite of his years began to build the present cathedral. During the twelve years he was there, until his death, he built steadily, after the manner of his brother, the building-bishop of Winchester, and some of his work remains.

But you will not think of Winchester when you leave your car in the little park across from the cathedral and begin to explore it. For one thing, it has a gigantic single tower at the west, a feature unique in English cathedrals, a tower which dominates not only the cathedral but the whole island and all the country round it. From this projects to the south side a single western transept, and on the north some buttressing and rough stone work that may have been a corresponding transept. But nothing is known about this, not even when it fell down. Another feature which makes Ely different is the very large porch, or Galilee, which brings the building forward to the roadway, which is Early English and delightful in style.

By this time you know enough of cathedrals to recognise styles and dates if you happen to be interested. Look up at the roof of the nave here, remembering Peterborough. This is lower, but looks much higher, perhaps because of the shafts between the piers that carry the eyes straight to the painted vault, perhaps because the pointed arch at the crossing, where the great Octagon is built, dominates the whole nave so you must look at it whether you want to or not.

That Octagon is a masterpiece of construction, but you would have to know more of architecture than such a trip as this can give you before you can appreciate the skill that went to its building. Nave, choir, and transepts were completed in the Norman manner, the western tower had been raised, the style changed to Early English when the Galilee was built, and as one bishop succeeded another, Lady Chapel and Chapter House and all the rest of the complicated system of such a great religious foundation was being completed. About 1322 the great central tower fell down, and with it crashed the Norman choir. By this time the Decorated style had made its appearance, so when the outside buildings were left and all work was turned to putting up a new tower, of course it was designed in the new manner.

Either for added strength or because he had to fill up a huge hole in the masonry where the tower fell in, the new tower became an octagon, its eight supports enclosing a vast space, as you can see from either inside or outside the cathedral. Eight series of exquisitely designed ribs spring from corbels to carry the lantern, which is also an octagon, its angles set opposite those of the tower, however. The effect seems to be that all the light in the world is concentrated here, where nave and transepts cross. For not only does the light come from the great nave and transept windows, but from the four great Decorated windows set at an angle between them, and directly above, from the lan-

tern itself. There is no mystery here! They wanted light and they took it from every corner of the heavens.

You will probably not miss any of the "points" in Ely, for undoubtedly you will be taken in hand by a verger. The most tactful man that ever I met lived in Ely, and of course he belonged to the blessed race of vergers. The first time I went to morning prayers there, not knowing their service, I gave myself away hopelessly by fumbling with the prayer book—and as I happened to be the only one attending that special week-day morning, the mistakes must have been obvious. Not that it seemed to matter, for service was going on in the choir and I was in the nave. But a charming old gentleman, one of the vergers, slipped into a seat a few rows ahead of me, so by watching him, I did all the proper things at the proper time. And he only gave himself away by looking back once, just once, to see whether I had taken the hint and was copying him. Later he took me over the church and perhaps he'll take you, though it makes little difference, for all vergers are charming and lovable and deserve a special place of honour in the next world, since in this they are treated as quite ordinary servants of the Church.

Ask some verger (it might as well be in Ely as elsewhere) to take you through the upper parts of the cathedral. It is almost always possible to climb towers, and in many of these great churches you can also follow some of the pathways that

lead between the walls. For every part of the building had to be made accessible, the old architects knew that as well as the new ones. So they designed cunning staircases that wind like a corkscrew through the walls, that give one the oddest sensation and bad attacks of breathlessness, they are so steep and so narrow and the twisting is so sudden. And they designed narrow pathways between the outer and the inner walls, and along the triforium and over the vaulting and past the windows. Queer lights and shadows are here, where the people were never supposed to go! And curious vistas too, when you can stand looking down the pier instead of up, or are above the carvings you've only seen from below. You'll never know the exquisite work of the old builders, however, until you learn one cathedral at least as thoroughly as your time and your inclination allow you.

There is more than the cathedral in Ely. The old town runs down to the river Ouse (one of those which drain the fenlands) and the streets are more and more delightful as you near the water. There are such views of the tower and Octagon too from the river! And such views from the fields towards the south, and from the tangle of streets and passageways south and east, where ruins of old monastic houses are built in with the more or less modern houses (meaning they are but a few centuries old). There's a walk past a park to an ancient gateway, and a walk back along the streets

where the housefronts are cut up with the numbers of windows of different periods that have been blocked up and rebuilt as the houses were altered from century to century.

Once, evidently, it was an important town, but now it is quiet enough so you can be the only visitor at morning prayers on a summer morning. The life of the town always depended on the cathedral; when that was big and flourishing it provided work and a living for many people. In 1295 the town sent two members to Parliament—now it takes the island and a lot of the surrounding country to send one.

But alas for the saintly abbess that her memory should have come down to us in a word used in contempt and reproach! In the days when she founded her house on the Isle of Eels ("ael" an eel and "ig" an island, hence aelig in Saxon), she was called Etheldreda. But the British from all time have slurred and shortened their words as we've seen, and as the years passed, they somehow compressed St. Etheldreda into St. Awdrey, loving and respecting her just the same, and holding a big fair here every year in her honour. But at the fair they sold small cheap articles as souvenirs for the pilgrims to the cathedral to take home, and these objects became known as "tawdry," a still further contraction of the poor saint's much-shortened name, if not a slander to her memory.

Do you know as much of cathedrals and cathe-

dral building as you want? For, with the exception of some charming smaller places, Ely is the last cathedral of this present trip. We have missed much, though we have also seen much. We've missed Durham, one of the "great" cathedrals, some distance north of York, and smaller ones like Chichester, Chester, Exeter, Norwich and Ripon. We've missed some of the northern country, the Lake District, North Wales, we've not even touched Scotland or the Roman Wall built to separate the two parts of the island. You can walk the Wall, if you like, tracing the old line, from end to end of the island, as you can walk the length of the Pilgrim's Way from Winchester to Canterbury.

You have missed much, but you could not find all the joys and beauties of England in a lifetime of motoring. When you reach London (which you will do soon, it is only fifteen or so miles to Cambridge, and from London Cambridge is a leisurely drive from mid-morning to luncheon or mid-afternoon to early dinner), you will have Southwark Cathedral, St. Bartholomew's, Westminster Abbey and the huge pile of St. Paul's to show you what the Restoration people thought of religion. Within an easy run, for it is almost suburban, is Rochester, in case you missed it going to Canterbury in the beginning, or in case you want to see it again with the knowledge of all these other cathedrals to help you to a comparison. And you have St.

Alban's, a little way north, with Roman brick from the old Roman town of Verulam.

If you want to know more of mediæval architecture, stay a little while longer in Ely, and go at it systematically, with a verger and a guidebook, and all the picture postcards of details you can afford. The cathedral, remember, is the symphony, built of eternal stone instead of vibrating and vanishing sound. No cathedral is at all like any other, just as no symphony is like any other, and if I have kept repeating "This is Norman" and "This is Perpendicular," it is to make sure that you learn the differences between them. You will enjoy the cathedral more when you know its parts, just as you will enjoy the symphony more when you can follow the melody into the woodwinds, hear the strings as many voices singing in one harmony, and know the values of the brass and the drums. Like the orchestration of the simple tune into the symphony, the cathedral is a complicated structure built on certain fixed and simple principles. When you can see to the full the part played by light and shadow, by plain spaces and ornament, by neutral stone and coloured glass, when you can feel the rightness of the whole building—how the ribs of the vault carry the weight to the walls, how this weight is shifted from the windows to the masonry between, how the burden is divided so piers take some and outer walls take some and buttresses take up the outward thrust, how the weight is adjusted or balanced so it comes to earth

far beyond the walls in that divinely beautiful thing, the flying buttress: when you can see and feel all this, then your enjoyment will be many-sided, not bewildered, and it will be a hundred times greater and more lasting.

# Chapter Eleven

## THE ROAD TO LONDON

ARE YOU READY now for London, where the mediæval and the modern overlap? Your road is still more or less the Ermine Way, but it is impossible to identify it exactly with the motor road, it has been so much cut up and repaired and intersected and changed. If you are insatiable for antiquity you still have Cambridge to stop at, different from other towns you've seen so far on this trip because it is a university town. It possesses three things to add to your store of rememberings —the "Backs," where many of the old colleges back upon the little river Cam, a Saturday flower and vegetable market that is a square of brilliant colours in a haphazard pattern rather like the windows we've been seeing filled in with broken patches of the original glass, and the fan tracery roof of King's College Chapel, whose exquisite lightness and delicacy is hardly surpassed anywhere in the world.

And in London you still have Gothic architecture and a few (but only a few) very old houses. Or, if Gothic means no more to you than it did to the world for some centuries after Henry the Iconoclast, then you have churches and a cathedral that

show the spirit of the cultured but sceptical age that followed the Tudors. In London you can play a fascinating game finding the bits that were left of the past: an old cottage in a mews, some ancient stairs leading down into the Thames, a phrase used by a man on the street, the Lord Mayor's procession, a Roman bath off one of the busiest thoroughfares, a Roman stone in a Christian church, shells of oysters eaten by mediæval monks, thrown into a stream and dug out when they clean a conduit, a part of the original Wall, habits of mind and tricks of speech, and special customs and ceremonies, all to be found if you know where to look and what to look for.

Otherwise, you may see London as a jumble of what is modern and what is not quite so modern, but rather inconvenient. That's why I said at the beginning of our trip that to know it and love it, you had to have a background of what England was in the past. Do you feel, after all this journeying, that you've got that background? For England to-day is London; a layer of the Present over all its Past, so thin that in spots the Past shines through. Do you feel that after all this travelling back and forth between Roman and Saxon, Briton and lake dweller and paleolithic man, conquering Norman and mediæval monk, this jumble of fact and of legend, that you know a little of that Past which after all is your Past too? Let us consider it, journeying down the Romans' road towards London.

This is *your* background, remember, and this is *your* Homeland. Whatever your name or your family, this is yours if you number only one Anglo-Saxon among the multitude of your great-grandfathers and -mothers and their grandfathers and mothers. This is yours anyway, for you are bound to it by the language you speak and the books you read, by the traditions you were brought up in, by the very way you order your meals and have your vegetables cooked. From that recent adventuring ancestor of yours who sailed for the New World, his stay-at-home parents who tilled the hedge-divided fields we've motored past, back through generations of land workers and land owners you go, through Norman and Saxon and Dane and Roman and Briton to the man who carried a stone in his hand as a tool. Each gave you something, and can give you more, now you've come home to England for a bit.

Some—Norman or Crusader or the man who sought the New World—gave you Adventure, though so far in your life this may only have taken you around the circle and back to this Homeland of yours. Some gave you the urge to build—anything, from a railroad or a bridge to a suburban cottage; the urge is there whatever the form it took. Some gave you a need of beauty, which perhaps you never even felt before. That must be so, for generation after generation of these ancestors of yours out of their own need for beauty created the cathedrals.

"And here they are," say those ancestors, "the great cathedrals, the spiritual flowering of our time. Understand them and you understand us, and you understand yourself a little better."

Do you? You might have done it by staying home and studying the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, of St. Bernard, St. Francis and Abélard and others all the way back to the great St. Augustine himself, far behind the Middle Ages. But you would have found the way dry and often difficult. Far easier and pleasanter to do as we've done—get at the mind and soul of our ancestors' Age from the outside, so to speak, to go about in our motor car and look at what they did, so far as it is left for us to see it.

"The cathedral symbolised everything," say the ancestors. "Our faith, which was solid, was the crypt, our priests' logic the walls" (and both walls and logic often needed buttressing), "the religious stories we were told were the coloured windows and the carving, and soaring above the whole structure, the towers and spires, our souls' need of climbing somehow above the earth, our hope of reaching heaven. God was eternal and beautiful, we said, therefore His House should be the same. The best we had, either as a period of time or as a single man, went into the building." You have already proved that to yourself, especially if you have climbed around a cathedral, for never once did a workman do his job badly because he thought no one would see it.

Now why can't we do it to-day—or are we, perhaps, in the one or two really ambitious cathedrals we are erecting—in Liverpool, for instance, or St. John the Divine in New York? We have greater engineering skill, we have money, we have stone as good as they used, we have all their glorious examples, and we have workmen better paid and better fed and better educated.

"Ah, but have you our Faith?" ask the ancestors.

Have we? Aren't we saying, "We will build a cathedral as good or better than they did—where they filled their hollow walls with rubble, ours shall be solid stone, or welded together with concrete, where they had to vault a nave at eighty feet, ours shall be more than a hundred, ours shall be bigger and better, bigger and better." *They* who had Faith said simply, "We will build a cathedral to God as well as we know how."

Which will be most beautiful in the end? The judges must be many generations after us, when Time has toned down the new with the old; we will never know, we can have no judgment, only our prejudices.

Let us, travelling easily down the road to London, consider one of our ancestors, sitting aloft on a cathedral scaffold carving a stone. There were hundreds like him in our family, but one will do. He may have been carving a Christ with a nimbus, enthroned above the western portal of the church, he may have been chiselling a funny old woman

IN LONDON YOU CAN PLAY A FASCINATING GAME FINDING THE BITS THAT ARE LEFT OF THE PAST.

THE OLD GREEN DRAGON; AN INN OF OLD ENGLAND, ONE OF THE BITS OF BY-GONE DAYS BUT RECENTLY REMOVED.

pulling a thorn from her foot. *He* has given us something too, as you will see presently. Now whether he was doing the most or the least important work in the building, he was doing it with his heart and his soul, and with all his faith. And gradually this symbol of religion, which absorbed him every day, became confused in his simple mediæval mind with the thing it symbolised, which was God.

Now this was pantheism, perhaps, but if so, where was the harm? Pantheism says that God is in everything and everything exists in God. For centuries people have contended that it is wicked to say that God is in a stone. But, if our mediæval workman believed it, he was a better man and he carved a better statue from the stone—for you to see! And my argument is that you yourself must find something of God in the stone, or you'll never understand the workman, nor the ancestors who are speaking to us, and your journey to England will be wasted.

The Hindu (we have but little of his blood) sought perfection unsuccessfully through his bodily senses or through reason or logic, and found it by an intensive contemplation of the Infinite, which he called Brahma. Had our mediæval workman thought that way, he would never have raised the spire at Salisbury, nor carved the statues at Wells. The Greeks, whose bodily senses perhaps were stronger than the Hindus', gave human personality and human form, yes, and faults also,

not to one God but to many. You may object at once and say that that is not religion but anthropomorphic polytheism. Still, it was all the religion most of them had, and they raised, not cathedrals but exquisite marble temples to it, which we, when our simpler faith was broken at the end of the Gothic period, began to copy. So they gave us something architecturally.

But some of the Greek philosophers exalted a Supreme God, who had nothing in common with the frail inhabitants of Olympus. (Plato found reality only in the "Idea," but he influenced our modern thought more than he influenced the Greek temples.) Judaism said firmly "one God" but gave him no form. Christianity took over this idea, and gave us a Son with a form like ours. At least the form was human long enough for him to have lived and suffered like us, the better to understand our weaknesses, a God for us to visualise, to understand, and yet to exalt. (For the need to see with the mind's eye is always there, though the thing be intangible.) The Catholics went even beyond that, and gave us a Virgin Mother, who also lived and suffered, who does not judge, but pities, who does not condemn, but intercedes, who became, to the mediæval mind and especially to our mediæval ancestor carving away on his stone, as much of a reality as though she were a member of his household—which, indeed, she was. And it is only in this way, this bringing down Heaven to Earth and yet keeping it Heaven, that the

workman's faith was possible, that a cathedral was possible, that much of our present-day religion is possible, since we are taking what they gave us.

We must stay back in that Past one more moment, for we are nowhere near London yet. The great theologians of those days tried to prove God and then quarrelled among themselves as to whether or not He was capable of proof. But their theories and arguments, proofs and contradictions, were sifted down through the great scholars and writers to the higher forms of the priesthood, sifted again to the ordinary priests, and yet again and much simplified for the mediæval workman with whom we are most concerned just now. He could not understand the Infinite and would have considered the contemplation of it a waste of time. He could not worship an Abstraction, and would have built no temples to it. For centuries he had not even a Bible in his own tongue, even if he could have read it. He had only the priest's stories, the priest's sermons, or as much as he could understand and remember.

But he had Faith, and a philosophy of his own. God was good, and what was good was God, and that was perfectly simple, though indeed those theologians could have done a lot of wrangling over that simplicity! God was good and one tried one's best to be good also, knowing that the Son would understand and the Mother would not only understand but lean down and help if one went wrong. One worked for God, and possibly a little

more directly for the Mother and Son, in every action of life, and most particularly in the cathedral that was being built for the glory of the three. So of course everything, *everything,* went into it.

"And how else, please, would you build a cathedral?" ask the ancestors.

In no other way, you must answer, for there is no other answer to make. But after a time this cathedral, this symbol of God, became so close that it was identified with Him, as the statue that represented the Virgin in the workman's cottage became identified with her. Sterner philosophers who followed (alas, they were our ancestors, too!) cried out, "We have been worshipping images," not knowing that it is possible to worship *through* images to something greater behind and above them. So they smashed the miraculous glass windows, and they hacked down the exquisite statues (they were not pantheists anyway), and they said, "Now we can get into direct communication with the Deity since all this trash has been cleared away." Fortunately, their rule was not long, but the Age of Faith was over when they quieted down, and we have done nothing since worth placing beside the work they spared us.

What does it mean? you will ask, steering your car through the High Street of the last pretty village before the suburbs and trams and buses of modern London engulf you. Does it mean that

one comes to England to turn pantheist? Perhaps! In the end it is not a question of what is the nature of God or is He capable of proof, but, how is He to be reached? There are any number of ways, contemplation for one person and cathedral building for another. There are some who can find a direct communication and some who must have an image to look up to first. How much that ancestor, that cathedral builder on his scaffold, can give you, depends on your method. If you find his work so beautiful it quiets you with religious awe and you feel God must have been somewhere near directing it, you may be a good pantheist, but you are also a better Christian. If you do not feel God at all, but still feel the work is so beautiful it makes you thrill to its loveliness, it has still carried your soul up one little step nearer heaven and you are a better person, if not a better Christian.

England has all that to give you and much more—not only appreciation of the Past, but of the Present. Don't think her gifts are over because you have left the pretty villages behind and the thoroughly depressing suburbs are around you. Having discovered Beauty, you will recognise it again and again—around every other corner in London itself, even in a London fog! When you turn homewards, you will find it again in various forms, in the things we give our Faith to to-day—in skyscrapers wonderful in mass as you steam

towards them, in railway engines which are magnificent in every powerful line, in every oiled and rhythmically running piece of machinery. Beauty, appreciation, understanding, even amusement, are among England's gifts, if only you will go over and take them.

## Getting About

It is a simple matter to take your own car into England. In most cases you drive down to the pier the day before sailing, turn your car over to the people on the boat, who drain it of gasoline and oil and stow it away. A few hours after arriving you can drive off again, the car meantime having been washed, filled with oil and gasoline (petrol, now it's England), with your customs receipt, your British driving license in your pocket, British license plates attached, and with a temporary membership in either the Automobile Association or the Royal Automobile Club as well. In fact, you drive off the boat ready for your tour.

The cost of all this varies according to the size of your car and the steamship line you take. The Ford, as usual, goes cheapest, the Rolls Royce pays maximum. The White Star, Red Star and Atlantic Transport Lines take a Ford for $275 a round trip to Southampton or Liverpool and back to New York, a Rolls Royce for $475. The Cunard Line quotes $295 for a Ford, and $500 for a Rolls Royce. The United States Lines quotes $200 for a Ford, to $500 for a Rolls Royce. However, this is only for boats calling at Southampton, and the only boat on this line which goes to South-

ampton is the *Leviathan,* though their smaller boats take in Southampton on the way home.

The White Star, owing to the larger size of their hatches, can take any car on any boat uncrated. So does the United States Lines. In some cases the Cunard boats can only take crated cars, which adds $100 to the cost of the round trip. Also, in some cases, the car has to be shipped a boat ahead of the one you've chosen.

The Cunard and the White Star include in their cost such extras as getting your car and driving license, license plates and all formalities. The United States Lines make an extra charge for this. Great Britain has a thirty-three and a third per cent motor car tax, which is based on what they call the present-day value of the car, which you deposit when you arrive and are given back if you take your car out of the country again less than a year after you have brought it in. But this has become a formality; you can either put up a part of it in cash and the rest in a bank guarantee or you can give the steamship company a bank guarantee for whatever the amount is, and forget all about it. There is a "questionnaire," but it is quite simple, merely identification for yourself and your car.

And even these formalities are simplified by the courtesy of the steamship and the British officials, whose idea is to cut red tape and help you as much as they can.

At that, it is probably cheaper to buy a car there on the new selling-back system. For one

thing, the drive is on the right-hand side, as it almost must be for a country that drives to the left of the road. For another, petrol being expensive in England, British cars are made to run on a much smaller amount than our American ones. Petrol prices vary, of course; in summer the good quality costs about 40 cents a gallon and a few cents more outside the London area—3/3 for a two-gallon tin in London, 3/6 outside. But if your car does twenty-five to thirty-five miles on a gallon, this cost is not great. As for driving to the left, or shifting gears with the other hand, that won't bother you more than a few hours.

To buy one of the cheap popular makes of British cars works out about $25 a week on this selling-back system. This is for the small Morris-Cowley or the Clyno, the larger Morris-Oxford is a trifle more expensive. For instance, you buy a new car for a little less than two hundred pounds, the agents give you a guarantee to buy it back at the end of three months for one hundred and fifty pounds. You promise not to run fast for the first five hundred miles (and they attach something to your engine so it boils alarmingly if you do!) and to return the car in "reasonably good condition." They help you get your insurance, which protects your car, you, and any one or anything you may hit, in the most complete fashion, your driving license, costing about $1.25, and your car license for the quarter year you have the motor. In England this costs at the rate of $5 per horse

power per year, another way in which high-powered American cars suffer. The Morris-Cowley, for instance, is rated at eleven and a fraction horse power and taxed at twelve, so for the quarter you pay three pounds or fifteen dollars. And if you, with your rather grand American ideas of motor cars and horse power, think eleven and a fraction horse power inadequate, let me assure you that it will take you up any hill in England or Scotland, even if slowly, and smoothly along more level roads at forty or more miles an hour.

You can get larger and faster cars for more money of course. But these little ones are perfectly comfortable, easy to drive, they hold five people, and luggage can be carried behind or on the running board. If your trip is less than three months, you can hire any sort of car by the month too—for instance, Morris-Cowley or Clyno for twenty-eight guineas, Morris-Oxford for thirty, more expensive cars a little more. By the week, Clyno or Morris-Cowley, eight guineas, Morris-Oxford, nine. You can even hire a car for the week-end at less, though proportionately more, the price depending on the length of the week end.

Now as to inns—London hotels are probably as expensive as any of ours in the big cities. But when you get away into the country towns, the prices are quite different. Of course you must not expect a room and private bath, but you won't miss that much once you get there. To give you a general idea, you can stay at the quaintest and most delightful village inns for anywhere from five

to ten shillings a night each—you can also pay more in the "show places," but ten is a high average. Meals are cheaper, but you must take what the hotels call their regular luncheon or dinner, and the choice is not so very great. However, there's nothing better anywhere than the roast beef of old England, even if the ice cream is rather a poor joke, and the coffee almost unrecognisable as such. In the very smallest inns, where the landlord's wife is cook, you'll probably find the best food, and there are local districts where cooking is always good—Devonshire and Yorkshire, for instance. There are almost always local food specialties, to say nothing of local ale, to make your trip more picturesque.

Three of us toured England in a small British car recently for about six dollars a day each. That meant inns and meals, petrol and oil and tips and garage for the night, and I'm not sure but what a few picture post cards were included. We could have been more extravagant, but not more comfortable.

As to architecture—the writers of the local guidebooks which you can buy almost anywhere in England, have an inconvenient habit of using architectural terms without explaining their meaning. The whole phraseology of architecture is so romantic that you should know something about it, in any case, you must know enough to read the guidebooks. So without making a real glossary, here are a few of the most frequently used terms, put more or less alphabetically:

## A Note on Mediæval Architecture

THE *Abbey* is a religious establishment important enough to have as head an abbot or abbess, it is less important than a cathedral, which is presided over by a bishop. An *Abacus* is a square or round shaped stone on the very top of the capital of a pillar, on which the arch rests, or rather, from which it springs, since the restless feeling of an arch, particularly the Gothic arch, makes one describe it in terms of movement. The *Apse* is a semi-circular or polygonal east end of a church—when it is square at the east end it has no special name. The *Ambulatory* is a processional passage which goes around behind the High Altar.

The *Ball Flower* is the characteristic ornament of the Decorated period. It is a carved round flower, ball-shaped, like a tightly closed bud. The *Base* of a pier probably explains itself, it is the very lower part, and made up of plinth and some decorative mouldings. The *Bay* is the compartment between two piers in a church—usually naves and transepts are measured by the number of bays. *Buttress* of course you know. It is a mass of masonry to strengthen walls against the outward thrust of the weight above. Built away from the walls and connected by an arch, it is a flying

buttress, and does its work as efficiently and more mysteriously to the eye of the layman.

The *Cathedral* is so called because the bishops throne is there, "cathedra" it was called. The *Capital* is most important, it is the head of the pier or column, under the abacus. It is always ornamented in some way in a church, either moulded or carved with rounds, or with the most elaborate figures and foliage. It is one of the first things to look for in a cathedral, and one of the greatest joys when you've studied it. Much of the genius of the Middle Ages went into the ornamentation of the capitals. A *Chantry* is a small chapel connected with a special tomb so masses can be said for the departed. The *Chapter House* is the assembly room for the Chapter or governing body of the cathedral. In the old days the assemblies were opened by reading a chapter from the Bible, hence the name. Usually the Chapter House is a later period than the main building. The *Choir* is the part just east of the crossing of nave and transepts. The *Clerestory,* or *Clearstory,* is the very top story of the church, with big windows to light it. The *Cloister* is a covered walk running around a square garth or court for monks to work in or study, usually connecting cathedral with monastic buildings. The *Corbel* is almost as important as the capital. It is a bracket coming from the wall to support, or to seem to support, a weight—the ribs of the vault come down to corbels, for instance. Usually corbels are carved, often with exquisite

heads. The *Close* is the whole space or enclosure of the cathedral and its grounds. A *Crocket* is a projecting leaf or tuft of flowers carved as decoration on canopies, spires, etc., it came in with the later Gothic. A *Cusp* is where two arches meet and end; you'll see it in quatrefoil and cinquefoil ornaments.

*Dog tooth* is the name given the characteristic Early English ornament; it looks like four sharp pyramids meeting in a projecting point. A *Drip-stone* is a moulding over an arch, window, etc., originally designed to protect the stonework below from rain, often used as ornament. A *Fillet* is a small band separating two mouldings or the flutes of a column. The words *Foil* and *Foliation* are used of traceried ornament; foils are the spaces between cusps and with them form the featherings or the foliation of the ornament. Trefoil is three foils, quatrefoil, four, cinquefoil, five foils. This ornamentation came in with the later and more elaborate Gothic.

*Galilee* is a term for the porch or chapel built at the very west end of the church. Being the furthest point away from the High Altar, it was not so sacred as the rest of the building, so sometimes people not allowed to worship in the church itself could worship here. The name may come from "gallery." *Gargoyles,* of course, are water spouts to carry the water from the roofs and throw it clear of the walls, lest it wear channels in them. Some say the fact that they are always

hideous monsters refers to the legend of the spirits of evil turned to stone in God's presence. However, their sole practical purpose is to throw out water, therefore their mouths must be huge and, therefore, nothing but a grotesque head would be appropriate. The old builders had unerring good taste, and, as you know, they seized every chance to make a joke too; both are combined in the gargoyles. *Hammer beams* are long projecting wooden brackets to support a wood ceiling. Often they are carved like angels, as in Westminster Hall. A *Lierne rib* is a short rib, an intermediate one, between those which spring from the vaulting shaft.

*Mullions* separate windows into lights, they are upright bars or stone divisions. An *Ogee arch* is one with a concave and a convex curve to its sides, this is usually much ornamented, for it came in with the late Gothic. *Parvis* is either a small porch or a room over the porch of a church. A *Piscina* is a basin with a drain, near the altar, used for rinsing the chalice, to wash the priests' hands, to carry off consecrated water. These have often been destroyed; so has the *Credence,* a bracket to rest the chalice on above the basin. *Purbec marble* is a hard stone from Purbeck in Dorsetshire, capable of high polish and beloved of the Early English builders. *Quadripartite* moulding or vaulting is where four cells of the vaulting converge to one centre.

The *Refectory* is where the monks eat. The

*Reredos* is the carved screen behind the Altar—these were usually very elaborate, but most of the old figures in them have been destroyed. The *Ribs* are the mouldings covering the groins in a vaulted ceiling, they project and often form elaborate designs. The *Rood Screen* separates nave from choir, usually inside a near-by pillar is a tiny curved stairway leading to the *Roodloft* above the screen. The *Rood,* a cross or a carved Crucifixion, was placed above; most of these have gone.

A *Sedilia* is a seat or series of seats for the clergy in the church—generally three together, often niches in the wall and looking uncomfortable and chilly. *Squint* is a tiny window through the wall of a church, so some one outside may look through at the service—these are sometimes called lepers' squints, as lepers could not mix with the congregation. *Shafts* are small pillars clustering around a central column; they are completely or only half detached, and were abandoned in later Gothic as they gave little real support. The *Spandrel* is the space between the shoulder of the arch and the rectangular moulding around it. The old builders used this for carving figures and coats of arms. A *Stringcourse* is a horizontal band or moulding running along the building, separating it into stories.

*Tracery* is the ornamental work in the heads of arches. *Triforium* is the gallery above the main arcade of the church, usually fronting the space between the aisle vault and the actual roof. It is

called blind when it opens into this space and not to the light of the outside world, as does the clerestory above it. The *Vault* is the arched ceiling of a building, and the *Vaulting shaft* is the column, springing from the pavement or else a corbel, from which in turn the vaulting ribs spring to the roof.

THE END

Canterbury

Winchester. One of oldest towns. Roman

Salisbury. Early English (George Street)

Stonehenge

Glastonbury.

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